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PROJECT JACO

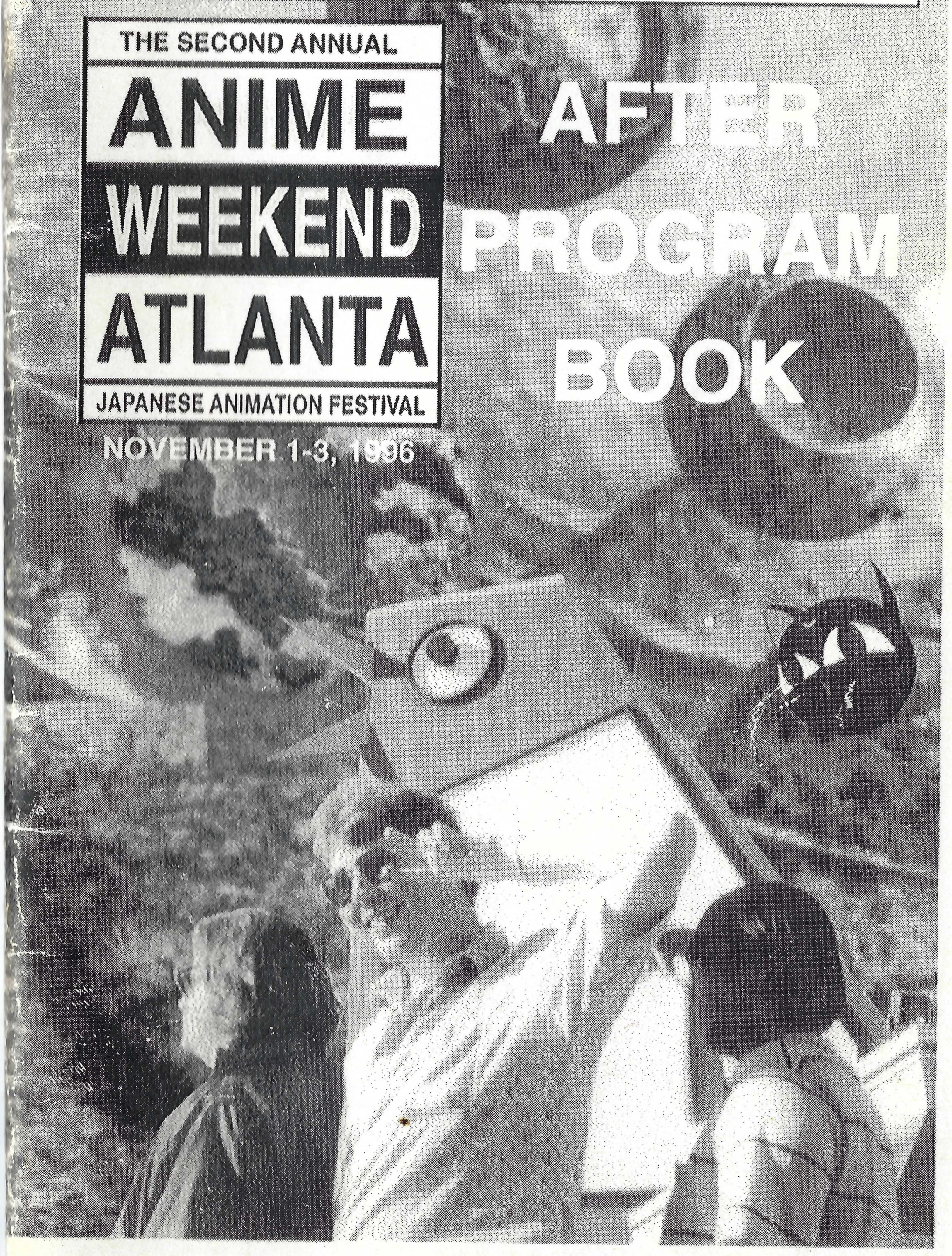
THE SECOND ANNUAL

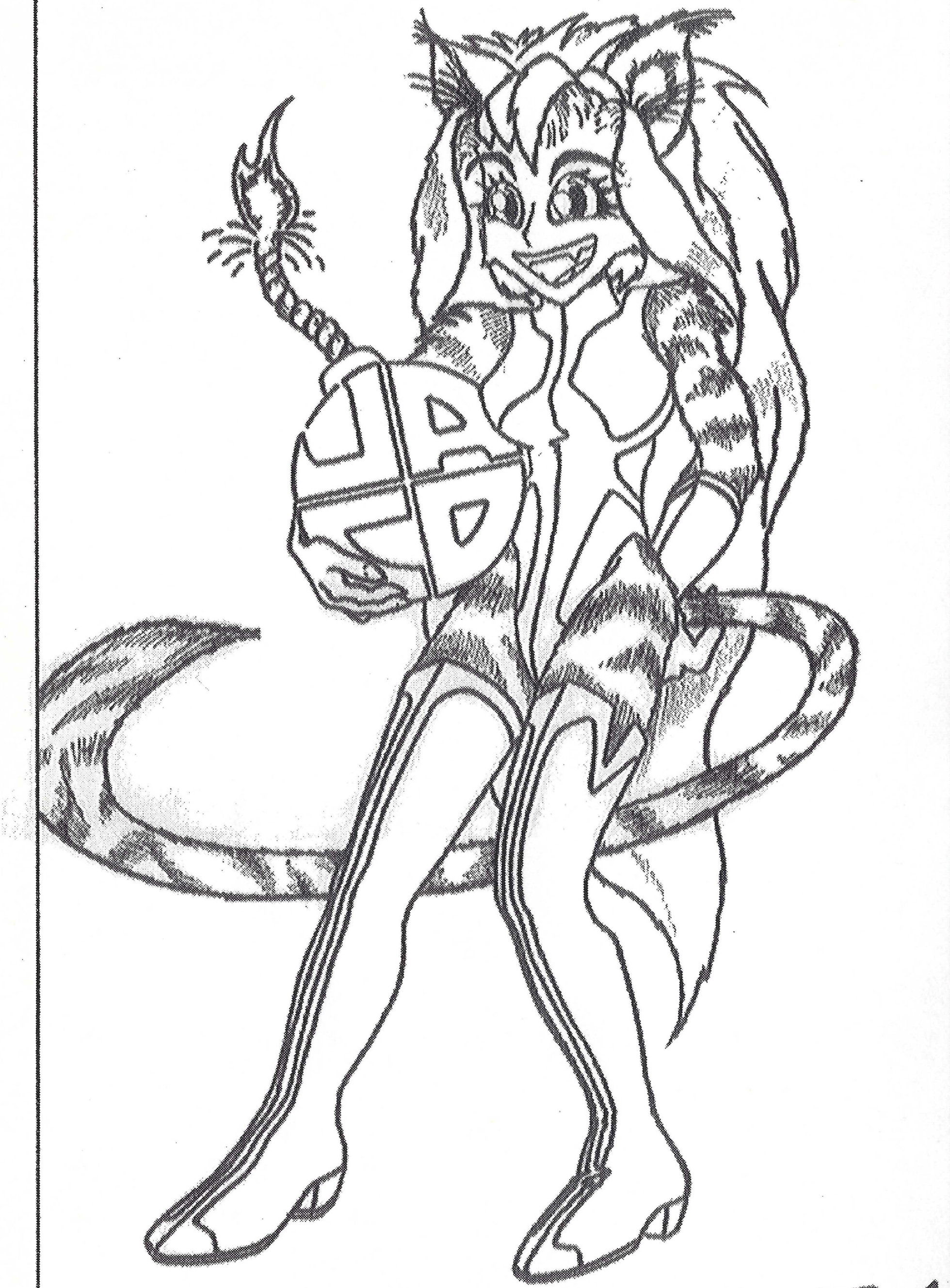
ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA

JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 1-3, 1996

AFTER PROGRAM BOOK





John J. Bohlen

John Bohlen ©1997

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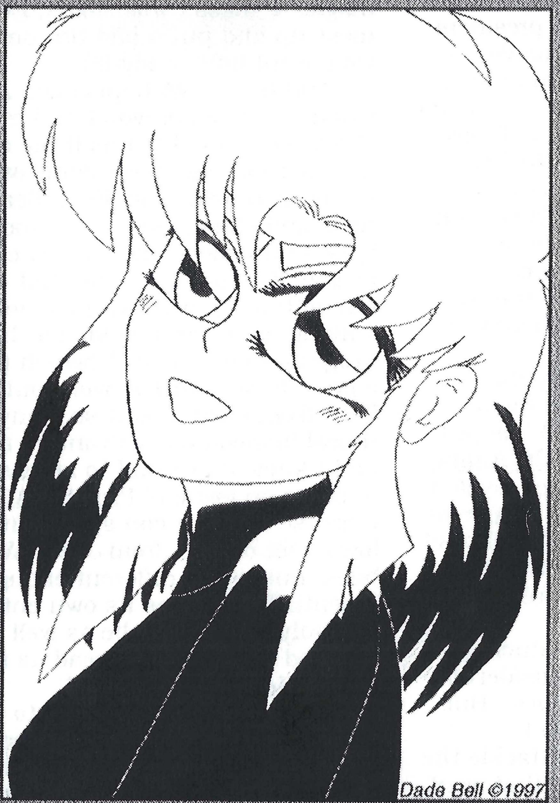

A Project JACO Special Edition

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Cover Picture:

"The Past!" composited by Gunbuster guru **Dade Bell** (who is now working on becoming an Evangelion guru) with some help by the eighth, ninth, *and* tenth wonder of the world, "The Big Chicken" and the epitome of nerdness: "Gurio". Pictured are (from left to right) JACO president, library builder, Anime Central sysop, and Ghost In The Shell guru **Fred Leggett**, Dade himself, Dragonball Z guru and video game extrordinaire **Sea II Oh**, and last but not least, the ever present, ever helpful **Luna Sphere**.

> *" Hey, Liberace was the Mother Ship Connection!"*
> *-Ed Lover*

Some Words From The Editor:

Well, it certainly took long enough to get another issue of Project JACO out! Over three years, in fact. The club basically took former president and Project JACO editor Joe Vecchio for granted when it came to producing literature, so when Joe left, so did the creative talent that made Project JACO what it was: one of the best fanzines out there and a masterpiece of printed work. Project JACO soon became *very* conspicuous in its absence and the remaining core members basically came to the conclusion that without Joe, there would be no Project JACO.

This idea was proven by the fact that since Joe's departure, the only printed material that JACO has put out were flyers and the JACO Anime Soundtrack Primer that Fred Leggett created. While the JASP was a great design and concept, and Fred should still be getting pats on the back, it's more of a catalogue and can't really be considered a fanzine.

Not that the idea of producing Project JACO was never considered-it was considered many times. But when it came right down to it, nobody thought they could tackle the mammoth amount of work that went into producing something on par with a Joe Vecchio production. I think that the prevailing attitude was that it would be better to produce nothing at all than to work away on something that wouldn't have a chance at being up to spec when compared to the Project JACO of the good old days.

I was a true believer in this idea which used to cause me quite a bit of frustration. The last issue of Project JACO was essentially created on my Amiga by a very enthusiastic Joe and the memories of those times are some of the best I've had. The summer of 1993 was magic and being there for the creation of a great fanzine made it all the more wonderful.

Which is why I was so frustrated in the years afterward. I was there for the excitement and fun of producing Project JACO and yet I was telling myself not to attempt to recreate that magic. I guess I was scared I would mess up and put a bad tint on a wonderful time of my life.

And then AWA happened. And when a new set of wonderful memories were made, I felt as if the summer of 1993 had never gone away. Being there with Joe, Fred, Sea II, Alex, and shoot, even Daric took me back to the days when JACO could accomplish anything and that our strength really was our membership. Talking to Joe and looking at his Program Book for AWA (which is such a great book that I've worn out the back from looking at it so many times) immediately galvanized me and I knew that I had to at least *try* to make an issue of Project JACO. Because this is a con special, it follows a lot of cues from Joe's AWA book, but is still different enough to essentially stand as its own entity. I can only hope it will be as well received and as fun to read as the Project JACO issues of old.

So to those who are new to Project JACO or couldn't attend AWA, I hope this book will facilitate the making of your own good memories. And to those who *do* remember Project JACO, I hope this is a sufficiently warm homecoming.

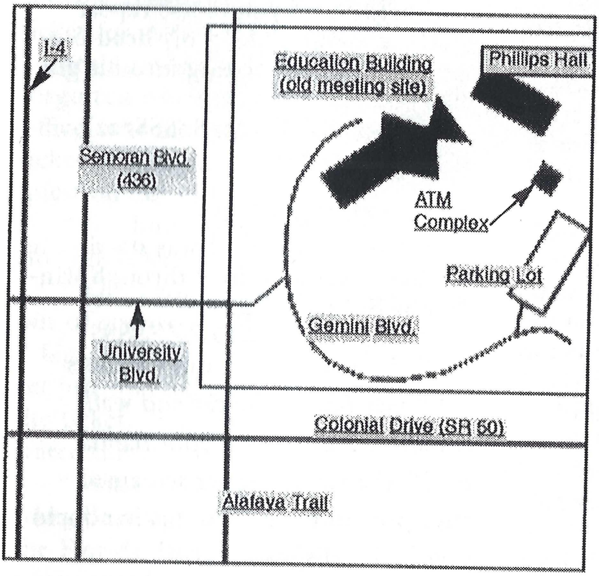
Dade W. Bell

-Dade W. Bell

Project JACO is a quarterly publication of the Japanese Animation Club of Orlando. A membership with JACO includes an automatic annual postpaid subscription to Project JACO. Memberships are $10 and are renewed annually. Send payment to:

JACO
c/o Fred Leggett III
2108 Howard Drive
Orlando, FL 32803

JACO meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month in room 115 at the Howard Phillips Hall at the University of Central Florida. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Membership is encouraged, but not required to attend meetings.


I-4
Education Building
(old meeting site)
Phillips Hall
Semoran Blvd.
(436)
ATM
Complex
Parking Lot
Gemini Blvd.
University
Blvd.
Colonial Drive (SR 50)
Alafaya Trail

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Sea II Oh
Treasurer

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Librarian/ Programmer

Dade W. Bell
Project JACO Editor

Casey Hollis
Secretary

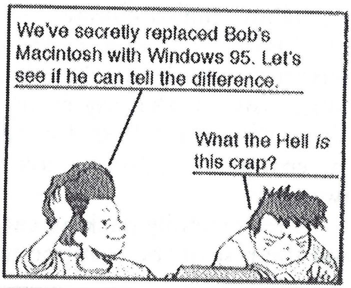
Nicole Kintner
UCF "Knights of The Roundtable" Rep.

Everybody Else:

Alex Matulich, John & Carmel Bohlen, Brian Oigarden, John Stepp, Mike Linakis, Ken Nabbe, Jim Calbeto, Brian Weis, Eric Wampner, Winnie Augustine, Abe Nantin.

With apologies to those I may have left out.

This book was produced on a Power Macintosh 8100/80 with 48 MB of RAM. All scans were done with a Microtek ScanMaker IIHR. Quark Express 3.31 was utilized for layout and production with an Apple Color StyleWriter 2500 used for the master print. For graphics and publishing, Macintosh is the *only* choice (especially in Japan!).


We've secretly replaced Bob's Macintosh with Windows 95. Let's see if he can tell the difference.
What the Hell *is* this crap?

“ I Been A Lot Of Places, And I Seen A Lot Of Things. But Sonny I Seen One Thing Beats ‘Em All!”

A Con Story in which a small group of travellers ends up in Atlanta...

Tuesday

WEAVING A STORY

The day that I had been longing for finally arrived. The weeks prior to that had been spent in planning and monetary finagelling. And, taking up every waking moment of my family’s lives was the construction of a costume. A costume with a quality control level that NASA could take cues from.

My parents had worked feverishly to complete this costume, but despite taking a couple days off work, the helmet had yet to be finished. You see, I was dressing as Kou Enshaku, the enchanted suit of armor from Giant Robo- the perfect costume to make use of my height of 6’ 5”. This of course meant that we had basically been building a suit of armor over the past month, which meant a little more time was spent on it than your typical Ranma costume.

But with a final burst of energy fueled by a winning combination of cigarettes and coffee, my father managed to do the impossible and finish the helmet only a couple hours before I had to leave. Combined with the perfect red mask and the beautiful fabric costume that my mother finished the night before, I knew that the costume was gonna blow people away.

After carefully packing the helmet and the rest of the costume into my car, I departed on the first leg of my journey: to Orlando.

Tooling up the Florida Turnpike at a leisurely clip, I’m sure the surrounding country side could hear the ELO, Evangelion, and ABBA music blaring from my car speakers. Night fell and as I glided toward the I-4 exit only a mile away, I noticed the headlights of a police car in my side view mirror.

“ *I’m only going four miles over the speed limit,*” I thought to myself, “ *He won’t pull me over.*” I was wrong.

After pulling over to the side of the road, my ears were suddenly assaulted with a blast of noise. After a couple seconds of confusion, I realized the officer was *talking* to me on his intercom.

“ Bzzzzbzzzbzzzzzzsssssssbbzz”

“ Uh, could you please repeat that?” I asked, poking my head out the window and looking into his glaring spotlight.

“ BzzzzBZZZzzzzBSSSSzzz”

“ Um, again?”

“ SSSSS-BZZZZZBZZZZSSSSZZ”

“ ...once more?” I was starting to feel like I was at a drive through window at Burger King.

“ BBBBZZZZXZZZZSSSS”

“ I’m sorry, but I can’t unders-”

“ *Get out of the car and walk toward the light with your handa out!*” the state trooper screamed after probably throwing his handheld down with disgust.

“ Oh, okay!” I said in a cheery

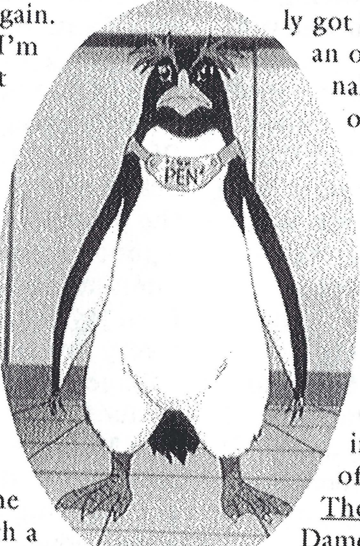
voice. I ambled back to the FHP car, spotlight blinding me, when the officer suddenly emerged out of the darkness to my left.

“ Hello! How are you tonight?” he asked.

“ Okay, I guess. Sorry I couldn' t understand what you were saying earlier.”

“ That's okay. Hardly anybody *can* understand me on that intercom,” and he got a look on his face like he was seriously considering just tearing the offending machinery off his car. After a quick shake of his head, he was smiling again.

“ The reason why I'm pulling you over is that your license plate light is out. So, I'm giving you a ticket for nine dollars.”



At this, I was completely stupefied. “ Uh, okay.” The surprise that I was actually getting a ticket for this and not a warning was quickly forgotten when, as the officer was filling out the ticket he leveled me with a question out of left field.

“ So, how do you think drug smugglers should be handled?”

“ Uh... you mean smuggling from out of country?” I stammered, “ Um, well, deport ‘ em!” The officer just nodded and went on writing the ticket. Then he stopped and stared directly at me.

“ What about the ones who smuggle drugs in the U.S.? Like on the Florida Turnpike....?” he said in a monotone.

Once again, I was completely taken by surprise and once again I was stammering for answers, realizing the whole time, the cop was probably starting to think *I* was a drug smuggler!

“ I... I would say... persecute them to the fullest extent of the law...” I offered. After a few moments of intense scrutiny, the officer relaxed and smiled.

“ Okay. Here's your ticket. Pay it in twenty days or the charge will increase. You have a good night.”

“ Thanks... You too....” I slowly got back into my car and after an overabundance of signalling, made my way back on to the Turnpike.

When I arrived at Fred' s place a half hour later, I was greeted by a starving John Stepp and a nearly unconscious Fred (which, thanks to odd sleeping schedules seems to be a permanent condition). After relaying my story, we headed off to feed John and to see The Hunchback of Notre Dame at the dollar theater.

After the movie, John went home and Fred and I went to pick up Sea Il Oh before getting our rental car. Upon our arrival, Sea roamed out of his house and cheerfully plopped into Fred's car and we drove off to find the rental place.

We soon found out that was easier said than done as we became a lot more familiar with the East- West Expressway due to the fact that we kept missing our turn. We could

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ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA

SOUTHEAST'S ANIME EXTRAVAGANZA

By James Calbeto

Aside from the misfortune of missing my flight on Thursday evening, everything involving Anime Weekend Atlanta was very promising. Now, before you start wondering what Japanese guest artists or voice actors attended the event, let me point out that A.W.A. is a small convention with a low budget. In other words for those who might be hearing-impaired otakus out there, A.W.A. had no Mikimotos, no Asamiyas, no Otomos, etc.; nonetheless, I think it is important to express that what this convention lacks in big name guests, it more than makes up for in its overall friendly atmosphere and in its dedicated approach to the medium.

Here are some of my highlights of A.W.A.:

1) Music Video Contest (A-)

For those who have never attended one of the music video contests at a anime convention, this competition consists of fans presenting their edited videos of an anime show (or shows) arranged to a particular song (popular/classical/alternative/etc). This year the overall winner of the contest was a very funny video that took from a wide variety of anime shows ranging from Ranma 1/2 to Gun Smith Cats to Tenchi Muyou and tied it together to Tripping Daisy's I Got a Girl. This music video was well-deserving of the honors. One of the other music videos that made a good impression on me was one that used edited portions from My Neighbor Totoro. It was a very introspective and peaceful collage of images of trees transcribed appropriately to Enya's The Memory of Trees. These are only two of the twenty or so entertaining music videos that were shown at the competition. Aside from the videos themselves, Jingoro (Daric Kozlowski) did a great job moderating the competition, and a special thank you to Mr. Joe Vecchio for shifting the event to a bigger room.

2) The Costume Contest (B+)

This is probably the point in an anime convention where you see who is the real fan-boy with cojones. The contest provided some good costuming, but none better than Dade Bell's Kou-Enshaku from "Giant Robo." From the plume on the Prussian-style hat to the robotic gaze of the mask, Dade outdid himself. Two other participants that are worth mentioning are the title character from "Armitage III" (very electric performance) and one of the patrol mechs of "Patlabor" (impressive from afar). The competition could have attracted a better selection of entries, but overall, it was pretty standard to what one sees at most anime conventions. The biggest problem one could say that I had with this part of the convention was that a great number of people had to watch the event from one of the small rooms through video relay.

3) The Dealers' Room (A-)

Almost everything that a fan would want to buy related to anime was there. Yes, there were some specific items that were not, but overall, the dealers' room had almost everything. I am glad to see that A.W.A. took a stand when it came to dealers selling pirated videos. Shoot me if you must, but I think it shows character. The size of the dealers' room was impressive with a great selection of anime CDs, garage kits, and art books. There was even one of the dealers that only sold "Sailor Moon" merchandise (and had a very cute girl - right, Dade? [*As you may have guessed, Jim's referring to Neo-Allison. -ed.*]).

4) JACOsub Panel (A/ so I am bias)

JACOsub is the subtitling program for the Amiga designed by fellow member Alex Matulich. I am not overstating when I say this is a revolutionary piece of software. The panel itself, unfortunately with the brief amount of time that could be devoted to it, showed the attendees the basic operations of JACOsub and its remarkable results. Both Alex and Jingoro did a wonderful job of demonstrating this great subtitling tool.

5) Miscellaneous (A-)

The convention aside from its main functions had a wide selection of fun things to do outside of it. This is, in my opinion, what makes a good convention a great convention. To start out with, how can I forget karaoke by the swimming pool Friday evening with the top billing performance of Dade Bell serenading to Joe Vecchio Neon Genesis Evangelion's "Fly Me to the Moon." Later, Mr. Vecchio took center-stage with his air guitar solo (quite impressive). Another fun activity that took place at the hotel where the convention was taking place was a video game room filled with Playstation and Sega Saturn Games.

Those of us who like a good Streetfight certainly were appreciative to have a place where we could kill a few minutes of our time. When it came to good-old, American festivities (alcohol/ loose women), the guys from A.W.A. did a hospitable job (especially Saturday) entertaining the convention members over at the party suite. To top the whole convention, Sunday evening's farewell dinner over one of the local Japanese restaurants showed me the great spirits of those whose organized the convention and the special guests who attended it.

It is a testament to Dave Merrill and all those who helped organized A.W.A.(especially my good friend Joe Vecchio/so I am bias). I have no doubt that they have planted the seed to what I think will eventually become the largest anime convention in the southeast. Good job, Anime X.

Con Story continued-

always *see* the rental place, but could never *get* to it. After going through the same toll booth three times, I felt obligated to tell the attendant how much I loved her work. The woman was a model of toll booth efficiency.

Just as we were about to give up and rent from somewhere else, we somehow actually arrived at our destination. Once there, it was agreed that a Chevrolet Lumina would be best. Fred, after sitting in the driver's seat for a few minutes giggled with sinister glee and proclaimed, " I *like* it!"

It was then that a phrase began to creep into my head: " Absolute power corrupts absolutely." Little did I know this would be proven the next day...

Wednesday

THE BEAST

The next morning, we finished loading all of our items into the Lumina and after bidding Fred's mother and sister farewell, and making a much needed stop at the bank, we were on our way.

Fred owns a Ford Escort, so you can well imagine what a delightful difference the Lumina was to him. We didn't just accelerate on the on ramp, we broke the sound barrier. Blasting along I-4, we passed quite a few startled drivers who no doubt were screaming, " Crazy tourist!" upon seeing the Massachusetts tags our rental car carried.

" *Tourists? If they only knew... If they only only knew....*" we thought.

Needless to say we made it to the Turnpike entrance rather quickly and as Fred floored it, we blasted on to the roadway at a speed that made our previous speed look anemic. Of course, we were having a ball and didn't care that our car was leaving vapor trails in its wake.

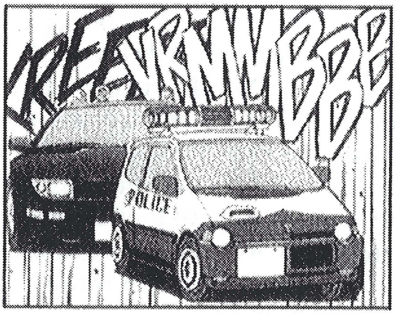
Fred worked the car through the full spectrum of its performance and triple digit speeds were not uncommon. Fred eventually slowed to what we all agreed was a " moderately brisk" cruising speed of about ninety miles per hour.

" You know, we can get a little better gas mileage if you shift it into Overdrive," I offered, but the suggestion fell on deaf ears. Fred obviously wanted to have the quicker passing response " Drive" offered in case some idiot dared to race us or do some other bit of highway rudeness. I was struck by an incredible sense of irony when we sped past a Greenwood Corvette (a car that tops out over 200), and I could see a triumphant smile spread across Fred's face.

When we entered Georgia, we were impressed by the beauty of autumn and the vivid colors that the trees in Florida don't get. I was reminded of my youth in Maryland, jumping in piles of leaves my parents had raked up.

This nostalgia was interrupted

when (surprise!) we were pulled over for speeding. It happened just after we passed a " herd" of cars riding at the ridiculously slow speed of seventy-five miles per hour. We suddenly noticed a black Crown Victoria riding on our tail. That in itself was amazing. But when a group of blue lights hidden behind the wind shield started flashing, we knew: John Law had caught John Q. Public and Fred found himself with a $205 "souvenir" .



Hedgehog's Dilemma

Upon getting to 285, we knew things were going to be " interesting" . Never had we seen a highway with such " imaginative" layout (even considering that all three of us have been to California). We were making our way to the 75- 85 stretch when we noticed that, without warning, traffic lanes would just turn off and go into something else. Apparently, in Atlanta, they don't believe in the concept of an off ramp. The right lane (and sometimes the one next to it) becomes the off ramp. We finally managed to get to 85 and then the *real* fun began! To make a long story short, we got a fairly comprehensive tour of the Atlanta airport area.

When we found the hotel, we were impressed by the accommodations and were very happy with our room. We were supposed to contact our pal, Joe Vecchio, but Sea was on a mission. He had to get to Iwase Books. By now, night had fallen, and we would be navigating those same roads in the dark. But, like the adventuresome men we were, we decided to brave it anyway.

Well, after an even *more* in depth tour of Atlanta, we finally made it to Iwase. I can't stress enough how great their selection is. Sea, who was so excited, he *leapt* from the car and *ran* into the store, already had a big armful of books by the time Fred and I went in. I was overwhelmed by how extensive the selection was and that it wasn't just limited to anime and manga. There were computer magazines, lots of golfing magazines, you name it! I grabbed a couple of Japanese Macintosh magazines (with CD-ROMs) and was overjoyed to find volume two of *Codename: Sailor V.*

-continued on page 18

The Inside Scoop!

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS THAT MADE AWA POSSIBLE

By Joseph Vecchio

So you all came up here: Fred and Dade and Jim and Sea, Eric, Mike and Brian, you all came to Atlanta to witness the spectacle that has become Anime Weekend Atlanta, and so inspired you were by what you had seen you decided to jump-start JACO once more. But the question at hand is, how did we do it? What makes the folks at Anime X able to put on a convention?

What magical ingredients go into its making? I'll tell you, but first I gotta say this: these things didn't just happen out of thin air up here in Atlanta, it was the result of a lot of different things happening over a long period of time.

Running a convention is different than running a club, mainly because of the money and the involvement of people who generally wouldn't join a club. At Anime X some, but not all, of the ingredients were there when I arrived here about three years ago.

First and foremost, there is Dave Merrill, titular head of Anime X and AWA, writer, artist, and all-around wacky guy. Dave is the reason things get done around here, mostly because he spends a lot of time corresponding with other anime fans and artists, and he's creative and talented enough to be able to talk to them at their level and not just as an admiring fan. Apart from the intangible things he brings to the con, Dave is the "guest schmooze," he is the one who can bring people in that other people might want to come meet.

Well, not really. Fact is, most of our initial guests were nothing more than buddies of Dave like Bruce Lewis and Steve Harrison. These guys, while decent artists and writers who do and have worked in the professional anime industry for some time, are not the best known guests in the world: at most of the bigger anime cons they would not receive such a high billing as we give them at AWA. Until Robert Woodhead of AnimEigo became a guest at the last minute in 1995, our biggest name was Vaughan Simmons, editor of Mangajin magazine. Other than that there was only Bruce, Steve, modeler Bill Mayo, and of course Ed Hill.

Ed is a friend of Dave's from Texas who writes the comic

Shaman Jump, which is filled with his lunatic vision of an insane world populated by characters that could come straight out of a Hello Kitty story, except that in Hello Kitty they're not liable to do things such as raise Gene Roddenberry from the dead (as in Ed's story "Night of the living Trek"). In truth, the first AWA, sort of, was held in October 1994, and was called Ed-Con in Ed's honor. It was nothing more than a party we held in the rec room at an apartment complex, and we all had such a great time we decided to do it again next year, except make it a little bigger. Originally we thought we would just hold a two-day con, but this thing started taking off bigger than we expected, and we expanded it to three days.

Now when you're running a convention, you have to have money up front. You're not going to get it from pre-registered memberships, at least not enough to pay off a hotel. Where you get your biggest influx of cash early on is from the dealers, and that's where Matt Buffington comes in. Matt is what is known as a "dealer schmooze," and few are as skilled in the art of the deal as is he: he was even once offered the position of running the dealer's room at DragonCon, which has as many dealers as AWA had guests its first year (he turned it down, it would have taken far too much of his time, he chose instead to be in charge of the artists, which of course is a big enough job as it is).

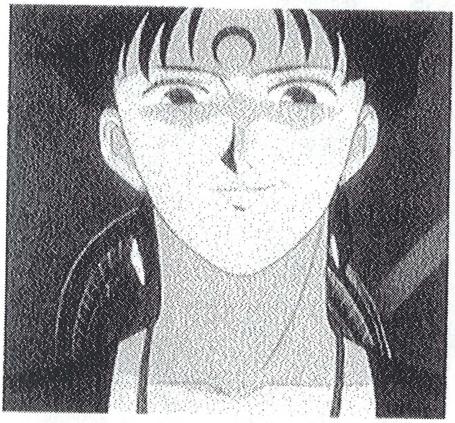
Regardless of anyone else's work, we couldn't have held AWA without Matt. More than the guests, people go to a con to check out the dealers, to see what they can buy at a con that they can't buy at a local store. And here in the southeast anime paraphernalia doesn't exactly grow on trees.

Of course it helps to have someone who likes to do the things nobody else likes to do: the bookkeeping. Lloyd Carter handles all of that for AWA, he's very good at it and likes doing it, which is great because I wouldn't touch that stuff with a ten-foot pole. Like Dave, Lloyd also does a lot of correspondence, and is well known around here for his attention to detail.

Well let's see, you have the inspiration, you have the administration, and you have dealers. Of course you have to get a hotel, too.

We picked the Castlegate Hotel the first year, because it was cheap. We'd always been fond of it, it was made for cheesy conventions like ours, we all knew it from Fantasy Fair and other cons. Unfortunately our experiences with the staff and the facility led us to seek elsewhere for 1996, and after exhausting many of our possibilities, we settled on the Holiday Inn Airport South.

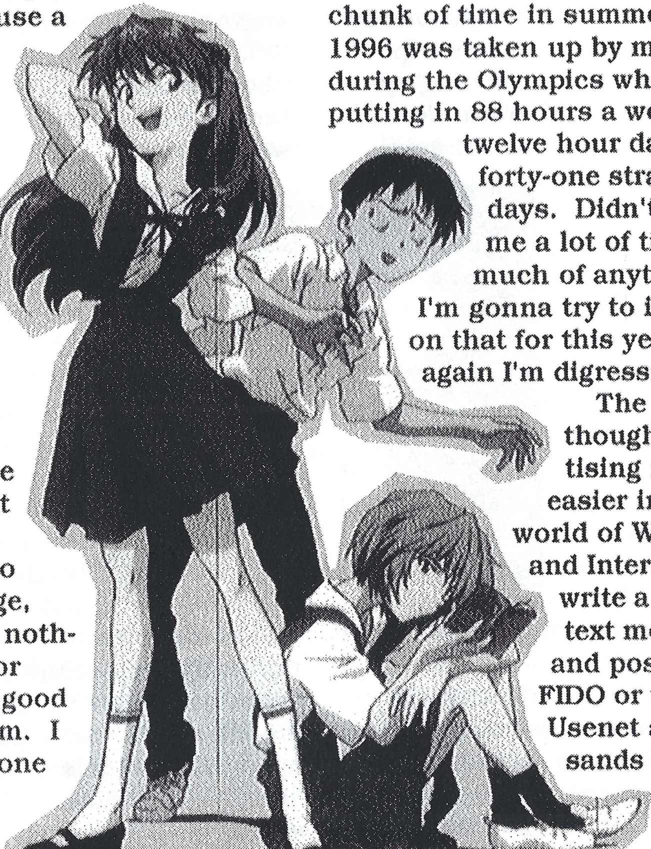
This is something you need to know if you're running a convention, by the way: Hotel staffs change and hotels get bought and sold very suddenly and without warning. We were originally going to hold AWA '96 at the Ramada Inn in Chamblee, we even had a verbal agreement and were in the process of beginning our advertising when this particular Ramada was bought out by Sheraton, who promptly tripled their price for the meeting space. Apparently the Sheraton is less than enthusiastic about sci-fi related cons. It was two weeks or so after that that I wandered into the Holiday Inn and found them to be not only amicable, but more importantly, cheap. The quote they gave us was about a third of the Ramada's original fee before the Sheraton's inflation. And even after that, our liaison changed twice before the con started, just one year later. It's hard to maintain a relationship with someone who quite likely will not be working at that same place in six months. Also on a side note never book a hotel under the anticipation of future expansion. What seems a sure thing one day can dry up very quickly. But I digress.



The Castlegate gave us a room block of about 100 room/nights, that is, a total of 100 rooms rented, cumulatively, over the three days (room/nights are calculated by multiplying the number of rooms rented by the number of nights they are rented. For example, 10 rooms rented on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each equals 30 room/nights). We filled that block up within six months of beginning to advertise for AWA '95. AWA '96 saw that number about double, and we project an increase for AWA '97. Eventually we just want to get to a point where we have a hotel that gives us all the meeting room we need for a decent price, and we in turn manage to have the hotel nearly booked solid. This is good for everyone involved, us because we can sell memberships and dealer's tables cheap (and naturally the dealers appreciate lower membership rates, it means more money people can spend at the tables), the hotel because they make a lot of money on sleeping rooms, and of course the attendees because we can pass the savings on to them in terms of inexpensive memberships.

Okay, now you have the officer cadre, money, and a hotel. The next thing is to let people know when and where this event is. This is my job.

I'm gonna say this straight out 'cuz there's no way to sidestep it. The problem with computer geeks is that they' re still computer geeks. However skilled they may be at programming or whatnot, most, if not all of them, don't have a creative bone in their body. Thankfully, I am not a computer geek. Yea I use a computer and have for years but I'm not interested in hardware and software except for how I can use it. I couldn't write a program to save my life. But dammit I know how to layout a page, and there's nothing better for that than a good DTP program. I know I've done a good job when I've impressed Dave, who isn't easily impressed. I had to learn how to do things a little differently up here, though: Anime X isn't a club for those who like things neat and packaged up. I'd already developed a certain style writing those twice-monthly flyers for JACO, it just needed a little more tweaking here, which mostly meant I'd leave a space for Dave and say "fill 'er up with artwork, Dave!"



I don't really handle the distribution of the flyers and advertising as much as I should, of course when you work 60 hours a week it's kind of hard to. A big chunk of time in summer of 1996 was taken up by my work during the Olympics when I was putting in 88 hours a week: in all twelve hour days for forty-one straight days. Didn't leave me a lot of time to do much of anything else. I'm gonna try to improve on that for this year, but again I'm digressing.

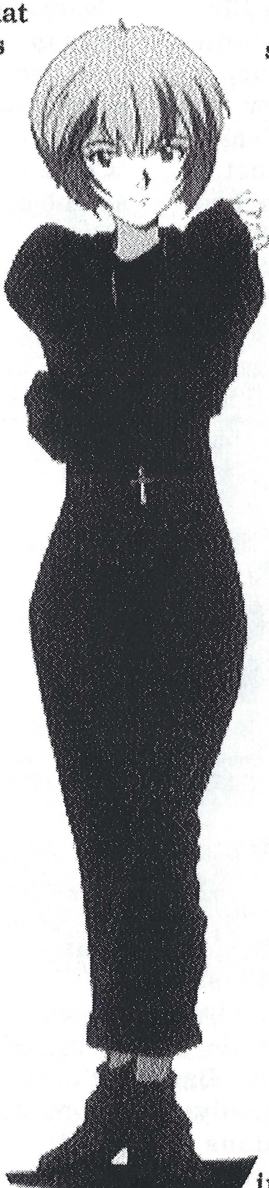
The fact is, though, advertising is a little easier in this world of Web pages and Internet stuff: write a simple text message and post it on FIDO or the Usenet and thousands of people see it within a week.

We took advantage of that and it was a great help. We also got mentioned in the newspaper for AWA '95, a nice half-page article in the Atlanta Journal/Constitution featuring quotes from Bruce Lewis, Dave, and of course myself.

It took a combination of all of that, plus several other people willing to be on staff, to put this thing together. Most people are happy being on staff: you don't have to pay a membership or anything (we actually started by charging $5 to be on staff, but we don't do that anymore, at least not as far as I know), and unless you're one of the directors, the workload isn't too bad. Well okay I'm probably pretty wrong about that, I know some of our guys work pretty damn hard during the con, some are pretty resentful of guys like me who have finished their responsibilities and can enjoy themselves while others work.

Of course putting together a 28-page program guide takes a lot more work than some people realize, the problem is it's all done out of the public eye. For the '96 guide I took 12 hours on a Saturday to just do the final spell checking and layout work. And of course even after it's finished you spot typos and wish you could have done things better.

But to get back to the subject, we had a pretty reliable group of people to help out, at least as far as upper-level staff goes.



Everything went pretty smoothly at AWA '95, except for the hotel. I have to explain, we chose the Castlegate knowing that it was kind of a dump, and we didn't have any real problems with that: in fact we felt it fit our image. A perfect example of Castlegate lore is when one of our guys was talking to the hotel groundskeeper and commented on the vines growing over and around their tennis court, to which the groundskeeper responded, "we have a tennis court?" This is why we loved that hotel. But things happened during the con that we simply could not tolerate. Okay, the fact that many of the rooms had neither hot water nor air conditioning is something that, while the hotel could have been better at keeping that fixed, is certainly something we could see as not being able to fix THAT DAY. On the other hand, staff members rifling through the rooms looking for valuables is another. Also, a VERY snotty attitude from the technical guy, who was seemingly working for bribes. It took a lot of work just to get a few extension cords into the dealer's room. Now we know the fact that, unwittingly, we had scheduled our con the very weekend the Atlanta Braves chose to win the city's first ever World Series, plus the Falcons playing the Cowboys and both college teams in town would make for rooms to be hard to get by. But locking Robert Woodhead out of his room (which had not only been reserved, but PAID FOR in advance), and then when he was finally reinstated, having to get them to give back his luggage, well, that kind of put us in a bad mood. Robert was very polite about the whole thing, in fact while we were apologizing profusely he was praising our professionalism in handling the matter, but the hotel made us, and them, look very bad. Bad enough they were conveniently "forgetting" room reservations to make room for more lucrative guests (that is, desperate suckers), but even we're not so lame as to fall for that crap. I guess they figured they could just push us around.

But apart from that, everyone still had a great time. We believe very strongly that one of the advantages we have over other cons is our ability not to take ourselves too seriously. In fact we're downright crass about the whole thing: other cons say "Come to our great con! We have so-and-so as a guest!" We say "No shirt, no shoes, no con!" It's an attitude thing, and it's something we have in spades over nearly every other con.

THE SECOND ANNUAL
ANIME
WEEKEND
ATLANTA
JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL

After '95 we didn't know what to expect for '96. Oh sure we expected more people (I was pretty dead on in my predictions for the first two AWAs as far as membership goes: I predicted 350-500 for '95 (we drew 368) and 500-750 for '96 (we drew 627). I'm expecting 750-1000 for '97, but we'll see), and sure we knew the hotel would probably be too small for us, but nobody expected it to be as well-received as it turned out to be. Even Dave was surprised. A lot of it had to do with attitude, as I mentioned before, but also it's because the people involved are, for the most part, mature, rational adults who are capable of making decisions and acting on them. All we really did was pick a hotel and a date and invite everyone over for a party and let things happen as they did. We didn't panic when things went wrong, and we didn't kick ourselves over mistakes we made. There's nothing more to it, really. That doesn't mean you can just go out and run a con, but when you have the tools it would behoove everyone to keep that in mind.

The only major screw-up I can recall for '96 was the fiasco with the "immature" film festival: we had it slated for one of the smaller rooms and it turned out we needed the bigger room. We eventually switched over, but it was a big pain in the ass, this time around we made sure we'd have plenty of space. But as far as problems go, I'm sure you'll all agree that that's pretty lame. I guess one of the reasons we have so few problems is that we plan so few really organized events. If you keep it as simple as possible, less things are apt to go wrong. In the end, it all boils down to us and our ability NOT TO PANIC when all hell breaks loose. Unfortunately, ours is such a unique group of people that trying to imitate our formula just wouldn't work. It works here simply because it does, and I'm afraid I don't have any other reason than that.

So if and when the time comes for you guys to put on your own con, keep some of these things in mind. Be yourselves, don't try to imitate AWA, hell we can't imitate ourselves, don't take yourself too seriously, and above all remember the purpose is to have fun!

Now all of you go home, get some rest, and get ready for MegaCon 'cuz I'm coming down there to kick some ass!

Con Story continued-

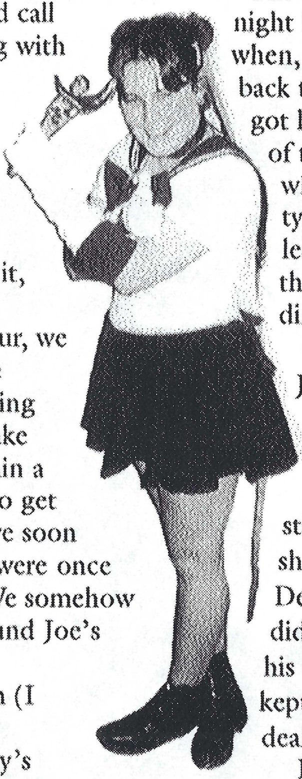
I wholeheartedly recommend Iwase Books Atlanta to any fan of anime and manga. A lot of the titles they carry, they have almost all of the volumes of, so by all means try them out.

After spending some time in the fantastic Tower Records located in the same shopping center, we headed back to the hotel, so we could call Joe and set up a meeting with him. We made it back with relatively little drama (only two or three wrong turns), and gave Joe a call. He gave us directions to his house and, you guessed it, we got lost.

On this particular tour, we became familiar with the Atlanta inner city. Nothing like seeing the police make two separate arrests within a five minute time frame to get the blood racing. But we soon found the highway and were once more safe and sound. We somehow got our bearings and found Joe's place fairly quickly.

After a warm reunion (I hadn't seen Joe in three years), we went to Denny's (the official eatery of JACO) and laughed and shared memories of old times. When Joe showed us the program book he had made for AWA, we knew we were in for a good time.

We took Joe back home after sharing some more stories and making plans for the next day (actually, later that same day since, in typical JACO fashion, we were at Denny's til about 1 a.m.). The evening's happiness was made complete by the fact that we made it back without one wrong turn.



Thursday

LILLIPUTIAN HITCHER

The navigational luck we had the night before vanished into thin air when, the next morning, we went back to pick up Joe and promptly got lost. This time, the tour was of the Atlanta country side and while we were awed by its beauty, we were annoyed nonetheless. The interesting thing was that we were actually following directions Joe had given us!

When we finally got to Joe's and told him that we got lost following *his* directions, we were greeted with disbelief and an often repeated statement: " You guys shouldn't have experimented!" Despite our insistence that we didn't experiment and followed his directions to the letter, Joe kept blaming us. Oh well, no big deal. Time for an adventure!

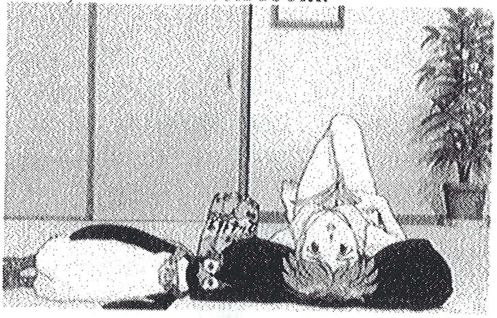
First, we went to the Asian Square shopping center and went into some great little Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese stores. In one of them, I bought a beautiful Sailor Venus poster and in another, I saw some great Sailor Moon knock off figures which I got on a return trip. I had to really hold back from buying a Sailor Moon/ Sailor Chibi Moon action figure two pack. So many things to buy and the convention hadn't even started!

After a big lunch at a nice little restaurant called Hama, we then headed off to see the Marietta Big Chicken, a glorified KFC built in the shape of... well, a big chicken (see cover). In an interesting feat of engineering, the Big Chicken's eyes move, and its beak opens and closes. Cool!

And then the horror began. I wanted very much to see the Olympic stadium and the Olympic Village, so Joe directed us on how to get there. But after a lot of wrong turns, compromised traffic spacing and other lunacy, we soon figured out that Joe probably didn't know how to get there. Considering he was actually a volunteer at the Olympics, this struck us as odd.

" Hey Joe, you shouldn't experiment!" I said. Joe didn't say a word. Despite all this, we were having a blast and didn't mind the fact that we were going on an entirely different tour of Atlanta that Joe promised. When we finally *did* find the Olympic Village, it was crowded with some kind of get together that for all the world looked like another Woodstock. Also considering that parking was a *long* way away, we didn't stop.

After checking out some other neat places, we headed back to the hotel, since Joe was on the Con Staff and had to help prepare. I had an entry (a mixed media of Sailor V and Sailor Moon) in the art contest that I had to finish up since it was recommended that all entries be in on Thursday night. A few hours later, Fred and Joe went to pick up Alex Matulich from the airport and me and Sea stayed in the hotel room.

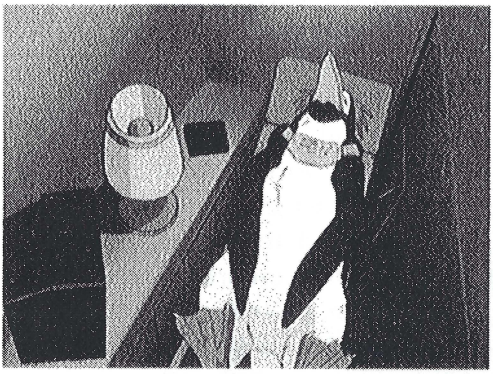


While I worked on my picture, Sea set to work with his Kanji dictionary to translate some of the extraordinarily large amount of Japanese printed material he had accumulated. We laughed and joked about things and talked about what a great time we were having and how much fun the day had been.

Fred and Joe got back with Alex and another warm reunion took place. Alex is another JACO member who has done much to make the club famous. The most prominent example is JACOsub, a subtitling program Alex has written that is the most widely used out there. Chances are, most of the fan subs you've seen were done with JACOsub. Alex moved away from Florida a couple years ago for a super important job in Washington D.C., so it was great to see him again. We all sat in the hotel room and reminisced about the good old days, and then Joe had to get back to volunteering.

We went down to see the con set up, and I caught a few quick glimpses of the dealer room which, after seeing some items literally stacked to the ceiling, really got our pulses racing. This was gonna be great!

The night ended with Sea and Fred going to pick up Jim Calbeto at the airport. A couple hours after they left, I got a call from Fred asking if I'd heard anything from Jim. They couldn't find him and were surprised when the airline that was supposed to be bringing him in at around 1 a.m. had stopped operations at 10:30 p.m.. After hanging up, Fred had Jim paged, but still nothing. They looked for Jim for another hour, but to no avail. They returned to the hotel defeated, and as we went to sleep, we all couldn't help but wonder: what happened to Jim?



Friday

The Day Tokyo-3 Stood Still

Friday! The day Anime Weekend Atlanta officially began. We were all up rather early for this (even Fred), and I quickly went down to register my art work. The guy running the art show was driving from Alabama or some place and wasn't there the night before, so I was hoping he'd be there that morning. Art show space was on a first come, first served basis and I didn't want to lose my spot. But still no luck. Fortunately, they allowed entrants to start taking their art and models in early to reserve space and I let out a sigh of relief. I then went back up stairs to get the rest of the group.

As we came down the elevator, we talked about Jim some more and worried if something bad had happened to him when, just as we got off the elevator, we saw him and Eric Wampner at the check in desk. After some quick discussion, we found out that the flight had some complications and Jim and Eric stayed in another hotel that night. With two more of our group present, there was only Brian Oigarden and Mike Linakis left.

Fred headed off to the airport to get Brian, and following a worrisome trend, came back empty handed. Brian was also lost. After looking around for awhile, Fred came back in defeat and he and some of the others went and had breakfast. Tickets had gone on sale at 9 a.m., so we all were ready. The dealers' room wouldn't open until noon, so there was some time.

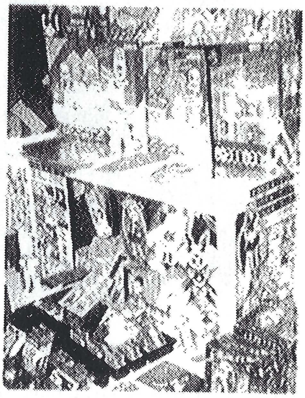
While the others were at breakfast, I sat in the front lobby and talked with Eric when what to my wondering eyes should appear, but Brian getting off a shuttle and coming into the hotel. He explained that he had been somewhere else in the airport from where Fred was and promptly headed up to the hotel room to go to sleep.

After that, I whiled away some time with Sea in one of the viewing rooms and watched a couple episodes of Sailor Moon S. These were the episodes where the Holy Grail is first formed and Sailor Moon becomes Super Sailor Moon. It was interesting hearing some of the sounds of awe the Sailor Moon fans who had only seen the dub were making. There were a few rooms like this showing anime around the clock and it was a blast to see some episodes I hadn't seen and to see some shows I hadn't seen at all.

A few hours later, Sea and I were standing in line waiting for the dealers' room to open. As soon as the clock struck twelve, the crowd ran into the room in a buying frenzy. Some of the people hadn't even gotten two steps into the room and were already buying things! And judging by the items on the tables they were buying from, I couldn't blame them.

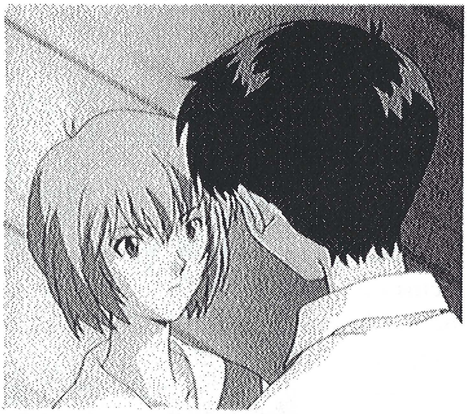
Sea and I made our way around the room, almost worried that if we got broken up, each of us would be lost forever. All of the tables we went to had at least ten things I wanted. This was pretty impressive considering that at a lot of cons I've been to, I've been lucky to find *anything*. There was so much! I heartily recommend AWA for the dealers' room alone! Sailor Moon, Gundam, Evangelion, Ah! My Goddess!, you name it, it was there! And the prices were great, too! There were many items that were for sale as cheap, or cheaper than their counterparts offered in catalogs like Newtype or Nikaku Animart. This was an anime fan's merchandise heaven!

After some of the hysteria died down, Sea and I split up and explored different areas of the room. It was then that I roamed over to the table for ANIMEted Characters, a place specializing in Sailor Moon merchandise. Being a big Sailor Moon fan, I was extremely impressed with the selection of items they had and true to their advertisement, it was nothing but Sailor Moon (well, the other sailors were there, but you get the idea).



While perusing, I looked up and noticed that one of the people sitting behind the table was a dead ringer for my ex-fiance, Allison. Small, and delicate, she smiled and I had to keep my self from fainting (falling backward into Laser Perceptions' table wouldn't have looked very suave). AWA was already great, but I certainly wasn't expecting *this.* So, after nervously saying how great their selection was and buying a couple Sailor Moon cards, I stumbled away, determined to make a few more visits.

I found Fred roaming around at the other end of the room, looking at the laser disc boxed set of the Gundam movies compiled from the first series and excitedly told him about this Allison look alike. In the best traditions of anime naming, she was christened Neo-Allison, and we referred to her like that for the rest of the con (mainly due to my terror at actually *asking* her name- pathetic, huh?). I knew that one of the things I *had* to do was talk to her some more and I was very happy to remember that the con was still young.



While I was talking to Fred, Mike Linakis walked over and let us know he had arrived. He had driven up that morning, and with his arrival, our JACO contingent was now complete.

The day went on like a blur, and we had to stop at our room a couple of times to drop off all of the stuff we were getting. Quite a nice stockpile was forming, and like kids on Christmas, we were all excitedly chattering about the various things we had gotten. This excitement prompted us to return to the dealers' room quite a few more times (and each time I made sure to pay a visit to Neo- Allison).

It was soon 5 p.m. and we headed to the *Compu- Anime- Hyper- Power!* panel of which Fred and former JACO member Daric Kozlowski were panelists. The panel was to discuss the state of online anime and where things were headed. Despite some interruptions from a group of wannabes from the Ranma board (whose ringleader looked like a purple haired Howdy Doody, which I hate to say since I actually *like* Howdy Doody!), the panel went really well and we all had a great time.

"There can be no second chance when Kung- Fu is used for evil."

-AWA Opening Movie

A couple hours later, at 8 p.m., the Opening Ceremonies began with Joe, Dave Merrill, Gordon Waters, and other Anime X members throwing candy out to the audience. AWA has been billed as basically just a big anime party and having this happening at what is usually a stoic event at other cons, really added to the feel. It was great!

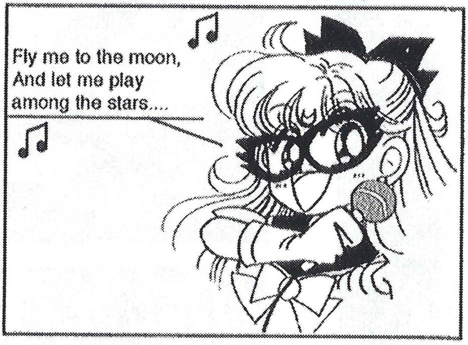
After introducing the guests of honor, most of whom said a couple of things, with Steve Bennett's low key anti- speech and Neil Nadelman's yelling, " I didn't translate Demon Beast Invasion!" particularly memorable, Joe introduced JACO. Joe told us to stand up and take some bows, but suffering a little stage fright, we instead remained seated and made a lot of noise. I was a little annoyed with myself for letting stage fright get to me and vowed that during the rest of the con I would throw caution to the wind and do everything, and have a great time. And when all was said and done, people would have no doubt who JACO was! Because of JACOsub, a lot of people already knew about us and clapped, which did our hearts good.

The Opening Ceremonies were a lot of fun, and they ended with the beginning of the AWA Video Trailer Park, a wacky collection of old anime, new anime, and general craziness. I was particularly happy to see the openings for the original Babel II series, Atragon, and Sailor Moon. While there were a few slow parts, the Trailer Park was an overall success. Being able to sing along with the English lyrics of the Macross dub alone, made it worthwhile.

Tired, we stumbled back to our room where Fred collapsed on his bed. But wait! The Karaoke Festival was happening! Determined to get on stage, I headed down with Mike, Joe, and Jim.

We arrived to see one of Steve Bennett's group, Kayte (who was dressed earlier as a very convincing Kei from the Dirty Pair), singing a song from Macross Plus. Off to the side were a pretty large group of people dancing and having a good time. When she finished, there was a call for someone else who would like to participate. I began to falsetto a couple of lines from Evangelion's " Fly Me To The Moon" to prepare, and when Steve Bennett heard this, he immediately got me on stage. So much for preparation.

Looking out at the crowd, it felt great to be up there, since here was an audience that could appreciate anime music and I realized a chance like this didn't come very often. After a couple of false starts from trying to find the right version to sing (there are literally more than ten), I launched into my best falsetto and started singing. I glanced to my left and saw an even bigger group of people dancing than before, including Steve Bennett. When the instrumental part of the song came, I recited the lyrics in my best William Shatner impression and the audience cracked up.



The instrumental ended and I started singing again, coming to the big ending where I would hit an extremely high note and I prayed my voice would hold, which, thank the Lord, it did. After the last four notes of the song, I looked out at the crowd and purred, " I love you!" just as Yoko Takahashi did in the original. The crowd cheered and I got a standing ovation which made my heart swell with joy. This was fantastic and I was having the time of my life!

Animerica writer Brad Diederichs then hit the stage and belted out the theme for Lupin III, " I'm a super hero!" for which we in the audience would chorus, " You're a super hero!" The dancing group was dancing like mad, and everybody was having a great time. Brad did a fantastic job of singing and really hammed it up, just as the song's original singer did. When the song ended, everybody was on such a natural high, that it felt like we could do anything!

-continued on page 26

JACO ROLLCALL!

Fred Leggett

Codename: Tuxedo Mask
Quote: "He who controls the library controls JACO!"

It's because of Fred that the JACO library even exists. With connections up the wazoo, Fred is *the* man to talk to about finding subtitled anime. And if no one else has what you're looking for, he'll sub it himself! Damn, he's good! And all of that hard work taxes Fred, so he must replenish himself with long days of sleep: for every hour of being conscious, he spends five asleep.

Sea Il Oh

Codename: Chibi Usagi
Quote: "Kami- Hami- Haaaaaa!"

The Legendary Super Saiyajin himself, Sea II likes to run around and blast small animals with his "magic fireballs". An avid video gamer, Sea II knows enough simulated fighting moves to destroy a galaxy: as expected of a Super Saiyajin. Unfortunately, his friends have been unsuccessful in convincing him that none of this is real!

Dade Bell

Codename: Sailor V (Get it?)
Quote: "Hey, she looks a lot like Allison..."

Romantic to extreme degrees, Dade spends incredibly long periods of time dreaming of the day when he can ride off into the sunset with the girl of his dreams and live happily ever after. Superstitious and driven by his horoscope, Dade still manages to get through life as JACO's resident artist, animator, and singer.

Joe Vecchio

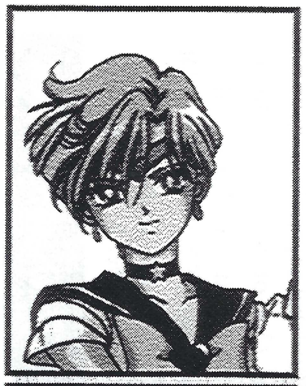
Codename: JACOtaking
Quote: "Pull my finger!"

First (and to many: only) JACO president, it was the sheer force of Joe's will that got JACO started. To this day, many of the older JACO members look fondly back to the Golden Age when Joe was president. Of course, the knucklehead had to go and ruin a good thing by moving to Georgia, but his great work at AWA more than makes up for it.

James Calbeto

Codename: Sailor Mars
Quote: "Goodnight, Joe. F**k you, Joe!"

Jim "The Libido" Calbeto is JACO's man on the scene at Enterprise. Jim's stories of his sexual escapades in the good old days are enough to make La Blue Girl look downright Nickelodeon! Jim has more college degrees than the rest of the club put together and he lives in a house haunted by a disembodied head. Visit at your own risk!



Mike Linakis

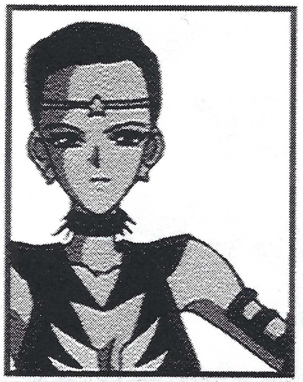
Codename: Sailor Uranus
Quote: "Where are those people driving to??"

Mike is the newest member of the JACO "in crowd" and, after prolonged exposure to the others at AWA, probably wishes he wasn't. A valuable new asset to the club, he nonetheless became an unfortunate victim to the navigation blackhole called Joe Vecchio. Even so, Mike persevered and had a great time at the con. And since that incident, Joe rides in Mike's car...

Alex Matulich

Codename: Compu-Man
Quote: "Get that... that *cheese* off my pizza *now*!"

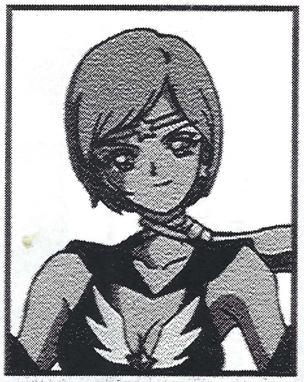
Enemy of all dairy products everywhere, Alex has made it his mission in life to eliminate milk and especially that stinkin' cheese! Alex also has the distinction of being the creator of JACOsub, thereby insuring the club's fame among the fan populace. However, because of the power he has given the common folk, evil empires like Viz have put a bounty on his head.



John Stepp

Codename: Maxi- Stepp
Quote: "Just what *is* Sailor Uterus?"

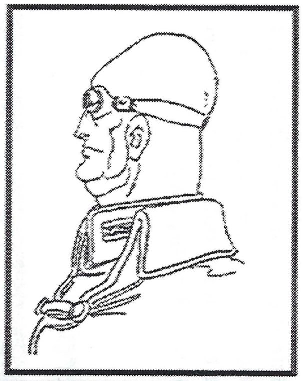
John wasn't at AWA, but he's been included in this roster because he was lucky enough to see Berlin at Pleasure Island and as Maxi- Stepp, he has to be present for the Mini- Stepp comparison. The only other modeller in the club besides Dade, John suffers from the disease known as "Neverfinishamodel". One of the side effects is his constant runny nose. Anybody who's seen John can also attest that the above picture almost really looks like him!



Brian Oigarden

Codename: Mini- Stepp
Quote: (To Neil Nadelman) "*John Stepp* likes your work!"
Neil Nadelman: "Uh... *who*?"

For some unknown reason, Brian has dedicated his life to becoming the perfect John clone. His mannerisms and speech patterns have thus come to resemble John's so closely, that many people do a double take just to make sure it really is Brian. While Brian has yet to suffer the sinus problems John has, they can't be far away! The Kleenex company is giddy with anticipation!



Eric Wampner

Codename: The Finger
Quote: "NRA... or *DEATH!!!*"

Eric owns the most unfortunate Miata in the world. Among other things, the poor little vehicle has become a heavy ordinance delivery platform that Eric uses to drive through Little Saigon terrorizing the citizens while firing off his M-16. The perverse pleasure Eric takes in this has emboldened him to go to Tokyo and scare the bejeezus out of what he calls "the little people".

JACO ROLLCALL!

Things went from great to completely awesome when, for the last performance, Evangelion translator Kuni Kimura hit the stage and sang the ending theme to Megazone 23 while Joe " played" a mean air guitar. Kuni did a fantastic job putting in all of the feeling and determination that Eve put in. And at his side was Joe, blazing away on his " guitar" like he was the next Brian May or Joe Satriani. The performance was really explosive and Kuni put so much into his vocals that, as soon as he finished, he ran to the water fountain and took a long drink. Joe brought the song to a close as he tore through the guitar solo at the end.

At the last note, everybody got up and cheered. As we all congratulated each other and talked about the great performances, new friendships were forged. Everybody felt fantastic, and as we all headed out, we introduced ourselves and made sure to hang out together some more.

Joe, Mike, Jim, and myself headed up to the con suite to relax and found Fred there, talking with Neil Nadelman about scripts and other related items. This was surprising since when we last saw Fred, he looked like he would never get out of bed again. We told Fred about all of the great karaoke he missed and then sat down and began to talk about how wonderful the day had been.

Soon after, we headed back to our rooms, smiling at how wonderful every part of Friday was. I had such a great time and was doing so many things that the only thing I had time to ingest the entire day was a little bag of Famous Amos cookies and a cup of Sprite. The first day of AWA had been a complete success and we all had such a fantastic time, that we wondered if the next two days could get any better. Much to our delight, they did.

Saturday

A HUMAN WORK

The second day of AWA began with me, Brian, and Sea II getting adjusted to each other's morning bathroom schedules. I was expecting some kind of huge argument to break out about our respective time management, but amazingly, nothing of the sort happened. Yet another good sign!

Today's agenda included two very important events: The " Immature" Film And Video Festival and the costume contest- both of which I was entered in.

The music video contest had so many entries that only a maximum of two of each entrant's videos could be shown. But what incredible videos they were! One of the videos, edited by "Cko Kotobuki" was set to Nikki French's remake of " Total Eclipse Of The Heart" and was simple yet stupendous. The power behind the song was matched perfectly to some very exciting and emotional scenes from Sailor Moon, Tenchi, and others. Two other videos of note were a video set to “I Got A Girl” containing funny parts from many of Rumiko Takahashi’s works, and “My Euthanasia” (a play on words of a certain Harlock film), a video by Lorraine Savage (editor of the incredible fanzine, The Rose) which was set to Spike Jones’ “You Always Hurt The One You Love”. This video was so funny that I had tears in my eyes from laughing so hard. To say the audience loved it is an understatement. I had no problem at all losing to videos like these. If you can get copies, I give them the highest recommendation.

Fred and I left the contest a little early so we could go up to the room and get me in my costume. Because Kou Enshaku is basically a suit of armor, and my costume was constructed as such (albeit of lighter materials), getting it on is a two person affair.

A couple nights earlier I had shown Joe the mask for the costume and he was very enthused, so there was already getting to be some positive buzz going around the con. As Fred was helping me get the first parts of the costume on, Joe came to the room to see how the costume went together and soon began helping. After putting on the helmet, one thing became abundantly clear: the ceiling on the upper floors were entirely too low. My height of 6’ 5” was enhanced to a height of over 7’ with the helmet’s plume. Walking down the hall to the elevator, I had to walk with a pronounced lurch forward to keep the plume from getting caught on the ceiling.

Thankfully, the first floor (where all the events were taking place) had a much higher ceiling and I could stand up straight. I walked along in my most regally menacing walk as Joe walked in front of me calling out, “Make way for Baron Kou Enshaku!” This was sooo cool! Fred, in his faithful red jacket, walked along beside me like an honor guard as bystanders stepped out of the way and gaped. Seeing this reaction and hearing all of the wonderful praise made me wish my parents were there to see that all of their hard work had paid off.

Immediately, we were swamped with people wanting to take pictures and to have their pictures taken with me. I was giggling with so much giddiness that I was glad I had the mask on to hide an emotion that wasn’t exactly in character. I think that Robert Woodhead seemed a little miffed when I walked down to the area where he was giving a lecture. Maybe seeing a character from his arch-rival Manga Video get so much attention was part of the reason.

I was very happy that I had brought along my camera since there were so many great costumes, and I had Fred take my picture with many of my fellow entrants. One instance in particular that struck me with sinister glee was when I came across a group of Sailor Scouts that had somebody dressed as Tuxedo mask hanging around. All of the costumes were fantastic with the characterizations of Sailor Mars, Venus, and Pluto done very well. As I was getting ready to have my picture taken with

them, the guy dressed as Tuxedo Mask (who I recognized from earlier in the convention when me, Fred, and Mike had played the Sailor Moon Super S game with him in somebody's room, and I signed his Save Our Sailors petition) asked me who exactly I was. Although Kou Enshaku can't talk, I couldn't resist.

" I'm Black Moon's newest recruit," I growled.

" Oh," came the response.

There was such an abundant amount of great costumes, that I was running Fred ragged getting him to take pictures. The cutest picture to come out was the Kou Enshaku and Bunny Girl picture. Her cute costume and adorable nature made her characterization perfect. Unfortunately, I keep racking my brains trying to remember the Bunny Girl's name (she was also Brad Diederichs' back up singer), so Bunny Girl, if you're reading this, you have my deepest apologies and I promise to print your name in an upcoming issue as soon as I find out what it is.

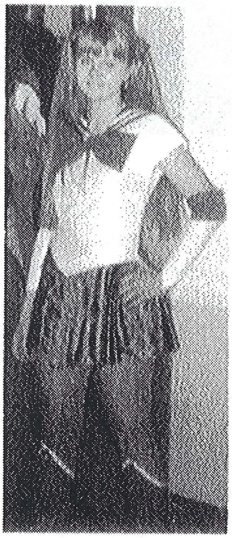
There were also a few girls dressed as Usagi (Sailor Moon), one of which, Meredith Hodges, did the infamous " Scepter Drop" the year before, whereby she dropped her scepter on purpose and turned her back to the audience so they could see her bottom as she picked it up. Considering how tall she was, this had an overwhelming effect on the audience. Because of this, I saw her as one of my biggest competitors in the upcoming contest. After all, if audience reaction had anything to do with it...

Also out and about was Kayte dressed as Kei, and out of all the Dirty Pair costumes and likenesses I've seen, I believe hers to be the best. This costume had more than a few guys running over to have their picture taken and frankly, I was no exception.

There was also a pretty good likeness of Lupin III, and Brad was running around in his now famous Tetsuo costume. It was soon time for the contest prejudging, and we all filed into the Maple Room. Once there, I saw two other perfect costumes: Armitage (this girl was an *exact* characterization and had quite a few guys drooling) and Nettie Hayden as Larva (with a beautiful mask and incredibly well made gloves to mimic Larva’s interesting hand design). This was going to be some pretty stiff competition!

The prejudging came to a close and we were instructed to be back there in about an hour. Because I hadn’ t drank anything that day, Fred and I headed up to the room to get some water and have some Sprite. Thinking about the long hours ahead in that hot costume made getting plenty of liquid a priority, lest I dehydrate.

After sitting in the hotel room for a little while and talking about all of the fantastic costumes, Brian came in and asked if he could borrow my key since it would be unlikely that I would need it again before him. This made sense, so I gave it to him. About ten minutes after he left, Fred and I headed out. No sooner had the room’s door closed and automatically locked that I noticed that neither me, nor Fred, were carrying the camera. And there was no way of getting back inside and getting it! ARRRRGH! So much for getting pictures of Armitage and Larva. This also brought the idea of getting any stage pictures to a screeching halt. Oh well...



We went down to the meeting place for the costume contest entries and stood in back. While there, I struck up a conversation with Larva (which is actually rather odd since neither of our characters can talk!) and we considered setting up some kind of mini skit together. Since we were both playing silent, masked, supernatural men (and since we both stood 6’ 5”), this would have been pretty cool. But after some more consideration, we decided it would probably be better to just stay by ourselves so that our costumes would get by on the own merits.

Even so, plenty of people couldn’t resist the “ team up” , so the two of us got many requests to have our pictures taken together; one of which had us performing Paper, Scissors, Stone. I came up with scissors, Larva had stone.

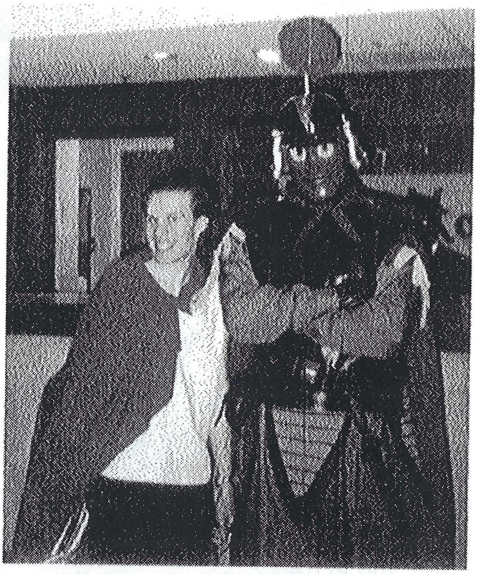
“ I don’t mind losing,” I said, “ since I *always* come back.” This brought a few knowing laughs. As we were lining up to go in, Leslie Forrester (in a cute Pretty Sammy costume right down to Ryo Ohki sitting on her head) moved me towards the front of the line to stand with the cute Sailor Scouts I had my picture taken with earlier and Nicholas Weir, winner of last year's Best Bribe category, dressed as Totoro.

Also at the very front was Jeff Tatarek dressed as an AV-98 Ingram from Patlabor. The sheer force of will that must have gone into putting this costume together was amazing since the costume contained a lot of interesting features, including the telescoping wrist used when drawing the mech's revolver. This costume was *very* impressive.

But my faith in actually having a chance to win the show was boosted when Dave Merrill walked by with two of the judges: Ed Hill and Carl Gustav Horn, who saluted me and proclaimed, " Together, allegiance or death! Big Fire!" to which I bowed in response. If only Fred could see this! He had left me a little while before I lined up with the other contestants so he could get a good seat in the audience.

As I talked with the Sailor Scouts (Sailor Mars was so cute!), Armitage's name was called and she hit the stage, performing the little dance Armitage does at the beginning of the anime, while the theme music was playing in the background. Needless to say, she had the dance down perfect, and there were quite a few howls of excitement coming from the audience.

Next was someone who was supposed to be a member of the Tank Police. However, his costume was actually more of a dead ringer for a character in Patlabor 2. He got on stage and performed a little skit of sorts and then, my name was called.



Because Kou Enshaku can't talk, I had no idea how I was going to do my presentation. I lit upon the idea to use Kou Enshaku's stony silence to my advantage. After getting on stage, I slowly regarded the audience with a slow, mechanical turn of my head. This was followed by a sweeping gesture of my arm which ended with a slashing motion at my throat. The howls of excitement and lusty cheering was just the reaction I wanted and I calmly strolled off the stage.

As the other contestants went (the skit that Sailor Mars, Venus and Pluto put on was cute. And Meredith did her Sceptre Drop yet again <dreamy sigh>), those of us that had already presented stood in back and waited. Ice water was being served since the concentration of bodies had really raised the temperature. I really needed a drink since my costume was so hot, but without Fred around to help me align my helmet, I didn't dare take it off. Because of this, I was forced to helplessly watch as other people gulped down the cool, refreshing liquid. Talk about sadistic torture!

The other contestants finished and the judges went into deliberation. After a nail biting wait, they came to their decision, and we all lined up, awaiting the results. Fred rejoined me in the line and we talked with the Sailor Scouts (By this time, I was determined to ask Sailor Mars to the upcoming dance since Neo- Allison seemed to have been spirited away) about the contest. Flirting while wearing a costume reminiscent of Darth Vader was a skill I quickly mastered.

We turned our attention to the stage when the results were being announced.

" For the category of Best Costume..."

I held my breath.

" Kou Enshaku!"

Yippeeeee! I won! I couldn't believe it! I was so happy that I almost grabbed Sailor Mars and hugged her until I noticed her mom staring me down. Even so, I was so overjoyed that I had to take a few seconds to compose myself before walking on stage to receive my award. Kou Enshaku giddily running on stage wouldn' t have been very much in character.

As I slowly made my way on stage, I grinned excitedly inside my mask. If only my parents could have been there to see that all of their hard work had paid off! Dave Merrill stood on stage and presented me with the Grand Prize: a cel from Ambassador Magma. This was fitting since the cel depicted the show's villain, whose appearance somewhat matched Kou Enshaku's. After receiving the prize, I bowed to Dave and made a sweeping bow to the audience and then made my way off stage.

Standing with the contestants again, we all discussed how much fun we were having and waited to hear the winners from the other categories. Because there had been so many Sailor Scouts, the judges decided to create a dedicated category just for them. Sailor Mars, Venus, and Pluto won their category for their great skit.

As they came back from the stage, Sailor Mars showed me her prize and smiled. I was just about to ask her to the dance when her mother announced that they were leaving.

" You're not staying for the dance?" I asked and Sailor Mars looked at her mom questioningly.

" No, we're leaving," was the answer and she whisked the girls away.

" Goodbye," Sailor Mars said sadly and then she was gone. Geez, first Neo- Allison's disappearance and now this! Alas, maybe next year...

My attention was refocused on the stage when all of the contestants were called back onto stage for a group picture. As the little risers creaked and groaned, we all lined up. Standing next to me was a very tall guy dressed as Shampoo. Kneeling in front of us were some of the Lupin crowd. The thousand words *this* picture would say would be very interesting indeed (a copy of this pic will be published in a future issue).

After the picture was taken, the costume contest officially came to a close in preparation for the dance. I waited on stage for someone to help me down since I couldn't see the floor so well. Fred had been lost in the crowd rush, and I was just about to risk a solo trip down when Sea came over to help. Dave also lent a hand, and I was soon safely on the ground.

Come to find out, Sea, Fred, and Mike were the only ones to see the show in the actual room. The other guys had been stuffed into another room with a video feed due to a limitation on space. This however was no fault of Anime X since they had to do things with what was available. Even so, Joe Vecchio has told me that next year's AWA will be in a bigger hotel, so this would be the only time that space was at a minimum.

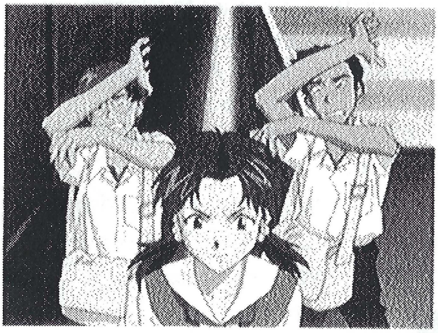
We headed back to our room and talked about how great the contest was. Everybody else made it to our room and we all had a great time relaying our different experiences. Joe told us what it was like sitting at the judging area and talked about what it was like to have Meredith's parents sitting next to him when she did her Sceptre Drop. We then took some time to relax and looked forward to the upcoming dance party. I decided to go to the dance wearing my Kou Enshaku cape so that people I had spoken to earlier would know who I was. We received word that the dance was ready to go and we headed down.

Both of You, Dance Like You Want to Win!

Our wondrous group headed down to the Oaks III room where the costume contest had taken place only a short time before. A DJ was on stage playing anime music through the colosal sound system that Gordon had built earlier.

We all walked in as the music jammed and began finding our own little places to dance, but our herd quickly thinned down to just me, Mike, and Brian (who, at my urging) was wearing his Larva costume. Looking out at the others at the dance, I immediately noticed Armitage. A fairly large group of guys had collected around her, and she graciously danced with each of them. Talk about a great girl! I felt like the luckiest guy in the world when she danced with me for a short time. I'm sure I must have had some kind of idiotic grin on my face. One guy was even taking pictures of her as she danced letting out howls of delight by calling, “ Whoooooo- weee!” Geez, this was one happy guy!

Even so, nobody danced *too* close to her since she had an air of danger about her, much like the real Armitage, and nobody wanted to become the next Dan Claude. That and the fact that her boyfriend, dressed as Devil Hunter Yohko (you read that right), was always hovering close by.



Dorrie Sauls, last year's costume contest winner as Urusei Yatsura's Shinobu was also there, as well, as Nettie Hayden (Larva), Kayte (Kei), Gally (I didn't catch her real name) and many others. This dance was an absolute blast!

The music being played registered from Alternative, to Rock, to (of course) Anime. Two odd things occurred at the dance: “ Fly Me To The Moon” from Evangelion began to play. Considering I had performed this song the night before at karaoke, I was overjoyed. However, just as the song started to get under way, the DJ cued a sound of a record scratching and took it off. Bastard! But hey, I guess that's the way it goes. The other strange thing was a guy who had a dance that could best be described as a mule kick. When he would do this strange move, he would throw his head back so he couldn't see what he was doing.

“ We'd better get outta his way before we become collateral damage,” I said to Gally, and she nodded in agreement. It wasn't long before the “ mule kick” claimed its fair share of victims, and the guy performing the odd dance soon disappeared.

After a while, the dance was winding down and I noticed that I was the only one from the JACO group still dancing as Mike and Brian had left earlier. They had all gone to some room to watch the latest episode of Babylon 5, so I ended up wandering around the hotel trying to find them.

I eventually made my way back to the Oaks III room where the dance had since ended and the sound equipment was being dismantled. There, Fred, Joe, and Eric had gotten together and were talking with Neil Nadelman. After talking to Fred and Joe about how the dance had gone, I visited with Neil and talked to him about our mutual favorite movie, Independance Day. After hearing various anime fans gripe about ID4, it was great to know that the man who had translated such anime favorites as Record Of Lodoss War, Macross Plus and Wings Of Honneamise was also a fan. Soon after, we all decided to turn in at around 2 a.m. Saturday had been a very exhausting day, but had truly been one of the best days of my life. AWA was going splendidly!

Sunday

Do you love me?

Sunday, the last day of AWA, and the con really didn't show any signs of slowing down. Much to my happy surprise, Neo- Allison had made her way back and was once again helping to man ANIMEted Characters' table. I decided that *this* time I would actually speak entire sentences to her and try not to make myself look like a blithering idiot.

She smiled when she saw me coming and gave me a knowing look (Geez, was I *that* transparent??) as I ambled up to the table.

" Hi," I managed to get out, just before a rather large (no easy feat since I'm 6' 5") man who was also at the table stepped between us and asked if I needed any help. Not wanting to look completely ridiculous, I asked to see their card selection again and I bought some deluxe Sailor Moon chromium cards.

I turned to Neo- Allison and gave her an expression to let her know I'd be back and turned away to find Fred so I could regroup (Jim told me that my intentions had become so obvious that in this man's eyes, Jim was guilty by association, because the man had identified Jim as being a friend of the guy hitting on Neo- Allison. Geez, even though I'm a nice guy, the guy had me out to be Amano Jack or something! <sigh>).

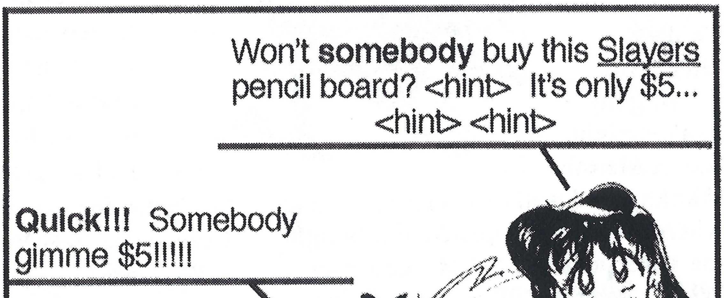
After finding Fred, I relayed my story and he gave me a " Why am I not surprised?" expression.

Generally wearing my heart on my sleeve has gotten me into similar predicaments before and Fred's seen 'em all. It was only a little while before the dealers' room was to close down and many dealers were making deals and slashing prices.

I looked over at Neo- Allison and seeing me, she slowly got up and walked over to the dealer's table I was at and looked at the stuff that was there. I felt wonderful to just have her near me and wanted to hug her. Just then I noticed that the dealer had a Sailor V resin figure. I had to get it! After a little haggling, the dealer let me steal it for $35. I proudly turned and showed it to Neo- Allison. Smiling and giggling in an adorably musical voice, she nodded

and agreed that the figure was very nice. I asked her if she had seen my Sailor V painting in the art show and she told me that she hadn't. I was going to suggest we both go to the art room and take a look when I glanced over to see the man that I had dealt with earlier staring at me with enough intensity to melt the resin figure I held in my hand. I decided that it wouldn't be wise to try to remove Neo- Allison from his sight and quickly abandoned my idea.

Turning back to Neo- Allison, I commented on how wonderful all of the big Sailor Moon figures the dealer had were made and she smiled. As we were talking, a guy asked the dealer about a Misato (from Evangelion) figure and the dealer told him the regular price was $100 but he was selling it for $60. I excitedly asked the dealer if the offer also applied to the Rei figures and when he answered in the affirmative, I quickly snatched one up. At long last I had a figure of the delicate female heroine from Evangelion. Being that Rei is also my favorite character from the show, I was doubly happy. I showed the figure to Neo- Allison, and while she didn't seem to know who Rei was, she was still impressed with the figure. I felt so wonderful to be spending this short time with her.


Won't **somebody** buy this Slayers pencil board? <hint> It's only $5... <hint> <hint>
Quick!!! Somebody gimme $5!!!!!

We moved down to another dealer table where the dealer was selling pencil boards. Neo- Allison set to work looking through the selection as I looked at all of the EVA merchandise (I *must* have a Nerv glass one day!) when she found a pencil back with Slayers on it. She stood there holding it and glanced at me more than a few times. I knew this was a signal to me to buy the board for her which I readily went to do. But my hopes were dashed when I reached into my pocket to find that I was $3 short. Buying Rei had wiped out my bank roll. Oh no!!!! I frantically looked around the room to see if

I could spot Fred, Jim, or Sea to borrow the $5 from, but couldn't find any of them. Defeated, I showed Neo-Allison that I only had $2 and wouldn't be able to buy the board for her. After looking at me with understanding, she took the money out and paid for it herself. She then looked sad and slowly walked back to her own table. I felt terrible and walked away.

Naturally, my luck worked out to where I found Fred soon after. After relaying my story straight out of Maison Ikkoku, Fred walked over to the table where it had all happened and bought me a Rei pencil board as a condolence. What a great friend! I noticed Neo-Allison watching this and saw her smile in understanding. I smiled back and bowed my head slightly.

Matt Buffington began to ask various anime trivia questions and was giving away prizes for correct answers. After correctly identifying Oshii as the director of Ghost In The Shell, I won a GITS movie poster and promptly gave it to Fred since he gave me the Rei pencil board. Because this was one of the big movie posters, and because Fred is a big GITS fan, I felt great to give it to him.

The dealers' room was closing, and me, Fred, and Sea walked out. I quickly spun around and ran back inside to ask Neo-Allison if she would be there next year and she said that she would try. I then decided to take a picture of her, but after seeing the man who was there glare at me, I said that I would take a picture of the entire table. Unfortunately, Neo-Allison ducked behind the display because she could see that the guy was clearly not amused.

So, I ended up getting a picture of the table, but not the girl. When I finished taking the picture, I told Neo-Allison how wonderful it was to meet her and that I really hoped to see her again. She smiled her gentle smile and nodded and we exchanged one last look, before I turned and walked away, never to see her again for the rest of the con. All I can say is I can't wait till the next AWA, when I can hopefully see her again.

Walking back up to our room, I told Sea and Fred and we talked about what we had gotten in the last portion of the dealers' room closing time and compared deals. Amazingly, Fred had hardly gotten anything, but me, Sea, and Jim more than made up for that. After dropping our stuff off and relaxing for a bit, we all headed down to the Oaks III room to see the closing ceremonies. Me and Sea ended up sitting a little ways apart from the rest of the group, but were still all close enough together to function as a single unit. This helped immensely when JACO was mentioned on numerous occasions- the most memorable of which was when Joe declared, " **JACO kicks ass!!"** At this, me and Sea yelled excitedly and the rest of the club followed suit.

Joe then went on to say that it was a JACO member who ran AWA's BBS (Daric), a JACO member who had put together the con literature (Joe), a JACO member who had created the most widely used subtitling application made (Alex with JACOsub), a JACO member who runs the biggest anime BBS in the South East (Fred with Anime Central), and a JACO member who won the costume contest and had a presence in the art show, film show, and video show (yours truly). With all of this in mind, it was very easy to see the truth behind Joe's statement: JACO kicks ass!

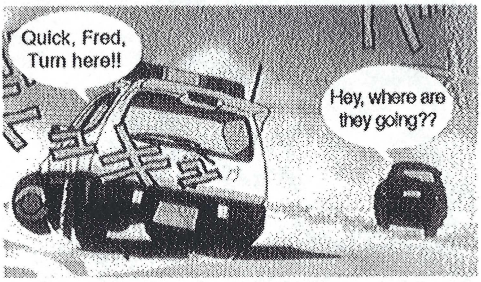
After a session of questions, comments, and complaints (of which there were very few), Anime Weekend Atlanta, officially came to a close. But happily, it was far from over!

The Beginning and the End, or "Knockin' on Heaven's Door"

Soon after the con officially came to a close, the Anime X guys decided to have an after convention party at Umezono, one of Atlanta's premiere Japanese restaurants.

Since Joe was one of the con organizers, and because we had made friends with most of the guests of honor, our JACO contingent was invited along. Talk about being in with the " in crowd" ! We all got on our coats (the weather was wonderfully chilly), and went out to our cars. Joe rode in the Lumina with me, Fred, and Jim, and Brian, Sea, and Mike followed in Mike's car. This proved to be a mistake.

After riding down the highway, Joe suddenly noticed that we missed our turn and told Fred to get off at the next exit. Mike followed faithfully, but when Joe told Fred to drive across four lanes of traffic to get on to another on ramp, we lost Mike. There was no way Mike could have foreseen this maneuver, and when he attempted to do the same, some idiot car cut him off. I could see Mike drive up to the next light to make a U- turn and explained this, but Joe said that it was a lost cause and made Fred go blasting up the road. I felt terrible about this and felt even worse when later, Mike explained that he was practically with us until we went tearing down the road. Curse you, Joe! As a consolation, Mike, Brian, and Sea ended up at Hama and had a great meal there.


Quick, Fred, Turn here!!
Hey, where are they going??

Me, Fred, Joe, and Jim arrived at the shopping center Umezono is located in and walked next door to Tomato, a great Japanese grocery store with more manga and anime related goods than most comic book stores. Something that added an interesting air of amusement was the fact that Japanese wrestling was being shown on a TV facing the counter. As the time drew nearer for the party at Umezono, we went next door and told (warned) the people there that we would have a large group of people coming and that we'd need their biggest room.

The table we sat at was about 20 feet long and thankfully had a cut out on the floor where we could put our feet instead of kneeling (with my knees, a near impossibility). We looked over the menu and at all the different delicacies that Umezono specializes in as we waited for the rest of our group.

LITA'S
COOKING WORKSHOP

LITA'S RECIPE FOR STAR SHAPED PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICHES

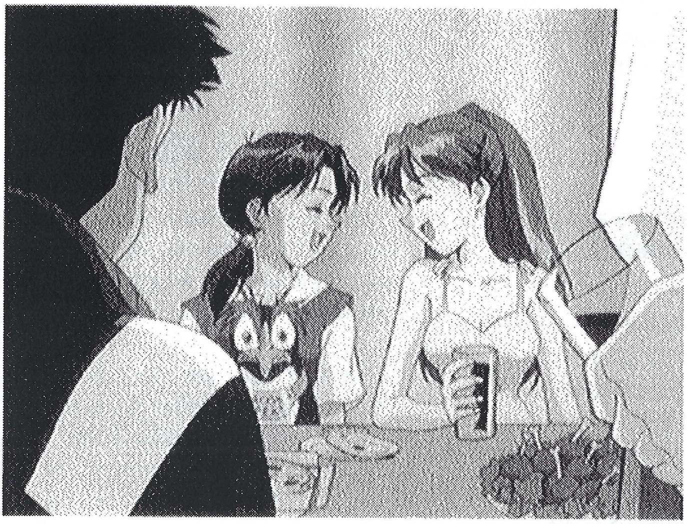
Take some slices of bread and cut the crust off. Then, get some peanut butter and your favorite jelly and make some sandwiches. Finally, cut the sandwiches into star shapes by using a large star-shaped cookie cutter or a butter knife. Ask your Mom or Dad for Help.

We didn't have to wait long before almost all of Anime X arrived with all of the guest of honor. The large table actually ended up being too small and a pretty good portion of the group (including Steve Bennett and company) ended up sitting in another part of the restaurant. Truly amazing considering that there was about 50 people at our table and about 20 that ended up sitting with Steve's section.

This ended up being one of the best parts of the con. A lot of cons don't let the " commoners" near the guests, so there's always a certain feeling of detachment, but at AWA, talking to the guests and getting to know them is encouraged and this dinner was the perfect example of that. I was lucky enough to have three guests sit near me- Ed Hill to my left, and Neil Nadelman and Lorraine Savage sitting across from me (Jim sat to Lorraine's right).

During that time I got to know Neil and Lorraine more and it wasn't long before Neil and I were doing Saturday Night Live skits together. How many other cons can say *that?* <Grin> I also got to tell to Lorraine about how great The Rose is and how wonderful it was to meet her (If I could put out a fanzine even half as good, I'd be pretty happy!). It was also great to talk about Evangelion with Neil and Ed (they're both big fans) and get an " insider's" point of view. Although Kuni Kimura, the show's official translator, was at Steve's table, Neil had a wealth of " inside" information I eagerly listened to.

I can't stress enough how much fun this whole event was and far it went towards bringing a fantastic end to a fantastic convention. Talking and laughing with the guests, while having delicious Japanese food made it one of the best times I've ever had.



After a couple of toasts to the guests and to the success of the convention, the after convention dinner came to a close. I don't think the employees will soon forget that night! Neil and I had been talking about various musicals and comedies when he told me that he had brought along his laser disc containing the deluxe uncut version of 1776. We soon decided that the best way to truly end AWA would be to go to the con suite and watch the hilarious musical.

If AWA wasn't going to be forever burned into our memories already, this would definitely do it! Gordon Waters volunteered his LD player for the task and we all headed out of Umezono giggling about the upcoming “ event” that would happen when we got back to the hotel...

The first place I went when we got to the hotel was to our room to see what happened to Brian, Sea, and Mike. As I suspected, Mike knew perfectly well what we were doing when we made that U-Turn and would have been able to follow us. Of course, with Joe telling Fred to blast down the highway, this was made impossible, so we lost them. After some searching, they ended up eating at Hama and had a good time. Even so, I felt terrible and apologized and told them about the upcoming 1776 “ extravaganza”

We headed down and met up with Neil, Lorraine, Gordon, and company as they arrived with the LD player. We then went to the con suite, hooked the LD player up and proceeded to experience the wondrous saga that is 1776. We had such a blast and laughed so hard, that we knew that it was a sure thing: 1776 would truly be the final event of all AWA after con parties to come. The whole experience can be summed up in these words: “ Ladies, and gentlemen... Liberace!!!!”

With the ending of 1776, AWA came to its final close. We all walked back to our rooms sharing memories and laughing about our favorite parts of 1776. In the span of only a few days we had all shared an experience that none of us would soon forget. We stood out in the hall outside our rooms (our room was next to Neil's), not really wanting to go to sleep (it was almost 3 am)- afraid that when we woke up, none of the magic of AWA would be left. After talking and laughing some more, we knew we couldn't put it off any longer and, after some more happy words, turned in.

Monday

Take care of yourself.

When I woke up, what I had feared the night before had actually happened. This was a day that had nothing to do with AWA. There would be no anime viewings, no parties, no costume contests- nothing. This was a Monday even more notorious than most other Mondays.

With heavy hearts we packed up all of the stuff we had bought and collected, and began taking our stuff to the car. My Kou Enshaku costume was put back in its box, its faithful service having been duly rewarded on Saturday night. After taking the last of our things out of the room, I turned and took one last look into the place that had been our home during one of the most wonderful times of my life (in fact, I can honestly say that AWA was only the tiniest fraction from being *the best* time of my life). The Pisces heart is very sentimental, and the heart of this particular Pisces was no exception, since I felt myself very close to tears. I was glad for the elevator ride down so that I could get control of myself.

I found Neil in the lobby, sitting with his things. I was very happy to plop down into the seat next to him and talk. I was glad that Neil also had a great time at AWA and would be back the next year. He asked if I would be at Katsucon (Brad Diederichs had asked me the same thing the night before) and I sadly said no. But I would most definitely be at AWA!

It was time for us to leave. We were going to take Joe home after visiting a couple more places and then head back to Palm Beach. After telling Neil what a pleasure it was to know him, I shook his hand and said good bye.

On the way out, we came across Steve, Ed, and some other friends we had made. I quickly grabbed my camera and asked Steve's wife if she would take a picture of all of us. A fellow Evangelion fan admired my Rei figure, so I let him hold her so that " Rei" could also be in the picture. Hee Hee! Steve shook my hand and told me that he was a fan of my singing and that I would have to give a repeat performance next year. Smiling gratefully, I told him I would.

With that, we left the hotel (this time, Joe rode in Mike's car!) and said goodbye to AWA and all of the wonderful fun it brought. We visited a couple more places (I had to get those Sailor Moon figures I saw earlier, and some Sailor Moon cards, and Sea was still stocking up on things), and ate at a huge burger place called The Varsity. This place had a phenomenal rate of service and the food wasn't bad either!

We then dropped Joe off at a train station that would take him to his house. Saying goodbye to such a good friend whom I hadn't seen in three years was heart wrenching. Without Joe, JACO would have never gained the prominence it had achieved and without Joe there would never have been a Project JACO. And without Joe, I would have missed out on one of the best friendships I've ever had. Giving him a hug, I once again had to choke back tears.

We said our final goodbyes to Joe and headed home. On the trip back we not only talked about what a great time we had, but also talked about how wonderfully Anime X had done. We talked about how JACO used to be just as strong and could also accomplish great things. It wasn't long before we started planning on how to make JACO great once more. We started thinking of what we could do and how we would go about doing it (it was right then and there, that I decided that Project JACO would rise again). AWA had brought about yet another wonderful thing: the return of the driving spirit that had made JACO great in the past. With that, JACO would be reborn!

As I sit here almost four months later and type the end of this story I began typing the week I got back from AWA, I can't help but smile knowing that JACO is moving along wonderfully and hasn't lost any of the steam we built up from AWA. We will be very well represented at MegaCon in March with our own room to show videos in and acting as an officially sanctioned convention entity. The club shows no signs pf slowing down and is, in fact, gaining more momentum. Because of this, I'm convinced that our time at next year's AWA will be even more wonderful. AWA was everything a convention should be and more. There were quite a few people saying it was the best con they'd ever been to (that's certainly my feeling as well!) and that it would be extremely hard to top the experience AWA provided. You'll get no argument here. The experiences we had at AWA helped to make JACO the best it's been in years and I for one can't wait to see what kind of magic next year's AWA will bring. One thing's for sure: no matter what kind of magic it will be, it'll be magic nonetheless.

-Dade W. Bell

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

Here are some of the folks that were involved with AWA. Tell 'em you found out about them because of AWA!

Dealers

ANIMEted Characters
2470 Windy Hill Road Ste 300
Marietta, Georgia 30067
(770) 432-3408 voice
(770) 432-9404 fax
anime@io.com
http://www.io.com
Don't ask for Neo- Allison. They'll have no idea who you're talking about.

Comics Plus
4650 Forsyth Road
Macon, Georgia 31210
(912) 477-5550

House of Anime
1500 Pleasant Hill Road #115
Duluth, Georgia 30136
(770) 923-2498 voice
(770) 736-4835 fax
house-a@mindspring.com

Iwase Books
Around Lenox Shopping Center
3400 Wooddale Drive, Unit C510
Atlanta, Georgia 30326
(404) 814-0462 voice
(404) 814-0561 fax

Musashi Enterprises, Inc.
Keith Johannsen
2613 S. 30th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215
(414) 383-7791

Rainbow Video
Japanese Video Store
6255 Peachtree Ind. Boulevard
Doraville, Georgia 30360
(770) 454-7556

Tate's Comics, Inc.
4942 North University Drive
Lauderhill, Florida 33351
(954) 748-0181

Titan Games & Comics
(770) 994-1825 info line

Ultra Play Video Games
Lawrenceville Market
Suite 530
Atlanta, Georgia
(770) 513-1910

Yakatori Den- Chan
A Japanese Pub & Restaurant
3099 Peachtree Road
Atlanta, Georgia

Clubs And Various Sordid Characters

Anime X
c/o Dave Merrill
PO Box 724182
Atlanta, Georgia 31139-1182
(404) 364-9773
Anime X is the club responsible for AWA's existence and indirectly responsible for getting JACO back up to speed. They publish Let's Anime!*, a thrice- yearly 'zine*

containing reviews, episode guides, con reports, etc. Write them for more info and while you're at it, tell 'em how awesome AWA was- even if you didn't attend!

Anime Hasshin
Lorraine Savage
PO Box 5121
Manchester, NH 03108-5121

Anime Hasshin is one of the " originals" in that they've been around longer than most of the new breed of anime fans! They're responsible for the be-all end-all, fanzine, The Rose, which has more content than most " professional" productions, with reviews, synopses, fan art, and other great things! Lorraine Savage, the editor, is one hell of a woman for making one of the greatest books in the history of print!

The Japanese Animation Society of Hawaii (JASH)
Wendell Hong
PO Box 22517
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

JASH puts out Animeco, a magazine that has even found its way to bookstores here in West Palm Beach! Thanks to their relatively close proximity to Japan, JASH has many stories in their magazine dealing with topics directly in Japan (where to shop, anime schools, etc). A very cool read! Also, the art by occasional contributing artist Audra (U-Chan) Furuichi is way cool!

The Japanese Animation and Science Fiction Association (JASFA)
c/o William Brehm Jr.
9 Reaching Circle
Baltimore, Maryland 21211

I don't know much about their current operations, but being from Baltimore, I figured I should mention them!

The Japanese Animation Club of Orlando (JACO)
c/o Fred Leggett III
2108 Howard Drive
Orlando, Florida 32803
fleggett@animece.oau.org
www.ewaorlan.com/JACO

The rollicking group of pals of whose exploits at AWA were retold in this book. Besides going to cons and trying our best to become permanent fixtures at Angel's and Denny's, we hold anime viewings every second and fourth Saturday of each month, and put out our little fanzine, Project JACO. Perhaps you've heard of it. You're holding a copy of it in your hands. Also be sure to sign on to Anime Central, JACO's official BBS run by the incomparable Fred Leggett. Rated the #4 Anime BBS in the world by the National Anime BBS Watch, this is the place to get scripts, synopses, graphics, local, national, and international Anime echoes, and of course, JACOSub support. Anime Central can be reached at (407) 645-2241.

Anime Weekend Atlanta
PO Box 13544
Atlanta, Georgia 30324
(404) 364-9773
http://www.anime.net/~awa/

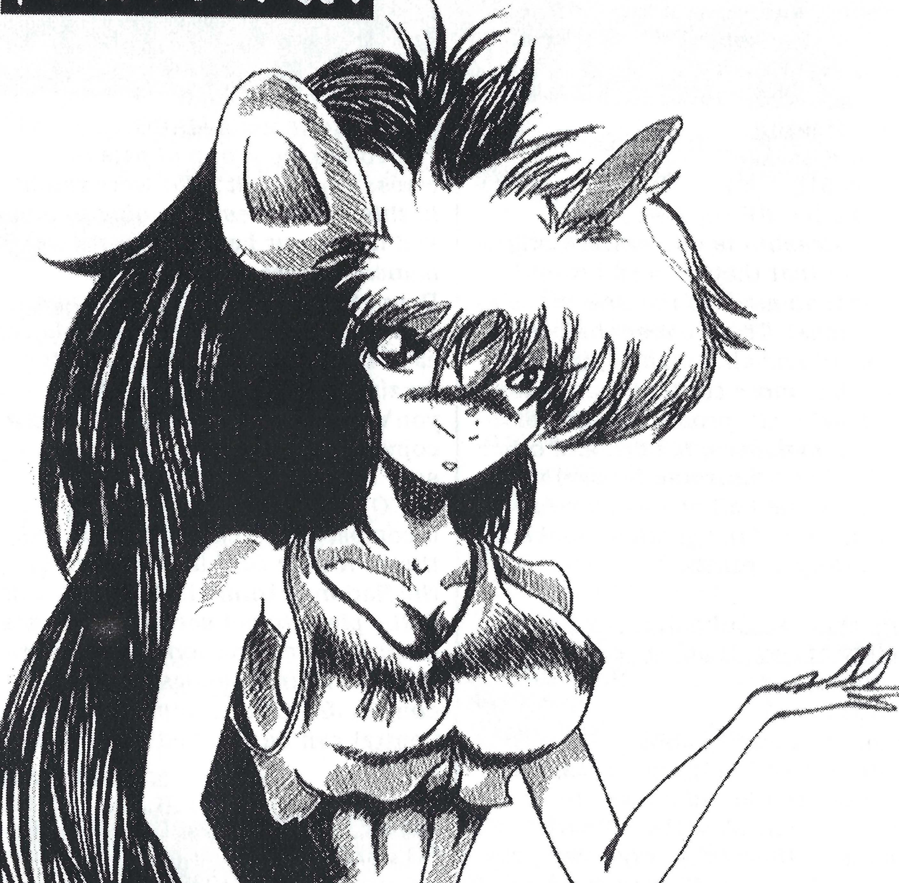
EMail:
General Information:
gwaters@crl.com

Administration/ Registration:
awainfo@mindspring.com

Web Page/ Video Contests:
awa@anime.net

The nice guys at Anime X have set up these dedicated outlets for finding out about the upcoming AWA III in November 1997. With so many different ways of contacting them, ignorance is no excuse for missing out on AWA. See ya there!

FAN ART!



Brian Weis ©1997

Brian Weis ©1997

SO FAR, SO GOOD...

Well folks, that's it for this issue of Project JACO. We'll be back sometime in the summer with our regular format (actually, I'm not sure what our regular format will be, but I'll think of something) containing some reviews, some synopses, the required fan art, and a run down on MegaCon.

As much as I would like it to be the case, every Project JACO can't be a con special and as such we need submissions to fill up our nice little 'zine. Synopses, reviews, write ups- if you've got 'em, we want 'em!

And if you've got an art piece that you've been working on like crazy and want to see it in print, we'll put it in. The only requirement is that it's gotta be original. My belief is that I'd much rather publish some original art that may not have the best line quality in the world, instead of a pristine copy of art work that already exists.

If you want to do a Ranma picture, more power to you. But it's got to be an original Ranma picture. I don't want to print a rehash of a Ranma LD cover with just a few things altered here and there.

This may sound a little draconian, but I've seen many fan art pages filled to the brim with copies, but hardly any original work. Knowing how much work goes into original art, I don't want to turn away anybody because their lines may be a little shaky, or something. The art that springs from one's own heart and hand is more beautiful than a mere copy and that's the talent that I want to showcase in here.

There have been times when I've said quite frankly that I'll even publish stick figures- as long as they're *original* stick figures!!

That said, send us your art! It *will* be published! If you've created a little manga that you would like to see serialized in here, by all means send it! Also, since we're a black and white 'zine, you may want to hold off on sending color works since grey scales won't be able to fully convey your art.

With written submissions, the minimum length is one page with no maximum limit. If you want to send in an episode guide to Legend of The Galactic Heroes, do it! It may be spread out over a few issues, but we'll print it. So what are you waiting for? Get to work and send those submissions in!

Project JACO Submissions
c/o Fred Leggett III
2108 Howard Drive
Orlando, Florida 32803

Letters to the editor can also be sent to the above address, or can be sent via EMail to:

karybdis@aol.com

I'D LIKE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE FOLLOWING:

Joe Vecchio
-for providing the inspiration for this lil' book

Fred Leggett
-for being a great friend, giving lots of support, and keeping JACO going

Jim Calbeto
-for coming back to JACO and bringing gobs of enthusiasm

Winnie Augustine
-for being my partner in crime in South Florida and laughing at my jokes

GAINAX
-for making Evangelion and Gunbuster

Apple Computer
-for designing the Macintosh- the best computer EVER!

Mac Addict Magazine
-for publishing such a Freakin' Awesome magazine. You guys are it!!

Mike Miller
-for making one of the funniest things I've ever heard

Steve Bennett
-for the encouragement at karaoke

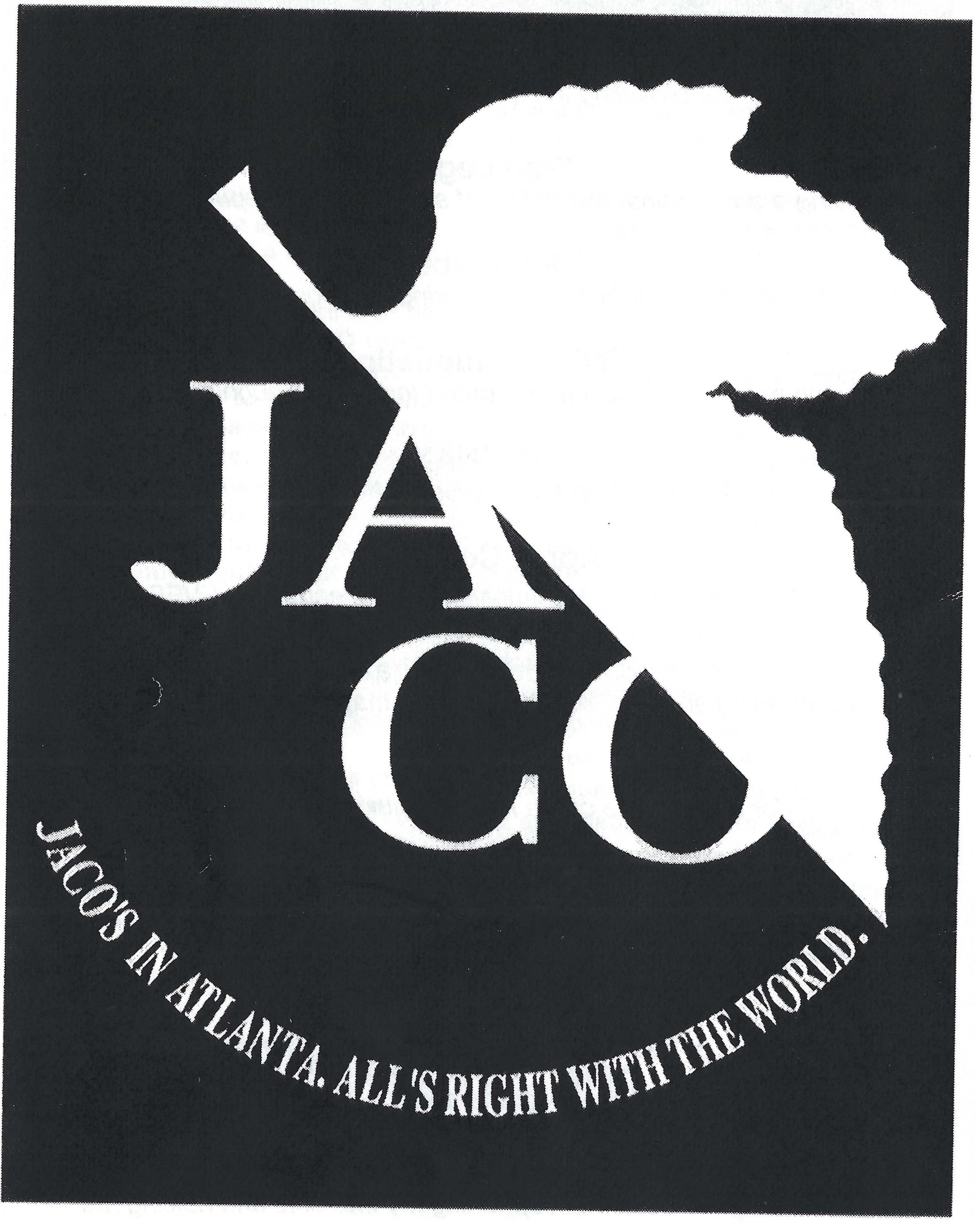
Neil Nadelman
-for being a pal at the after con party

ABBA, Queen, & ELO
-for the music

My Parents (Bernadine & Gordon)
-for making the costume, supporting my interests and helping me

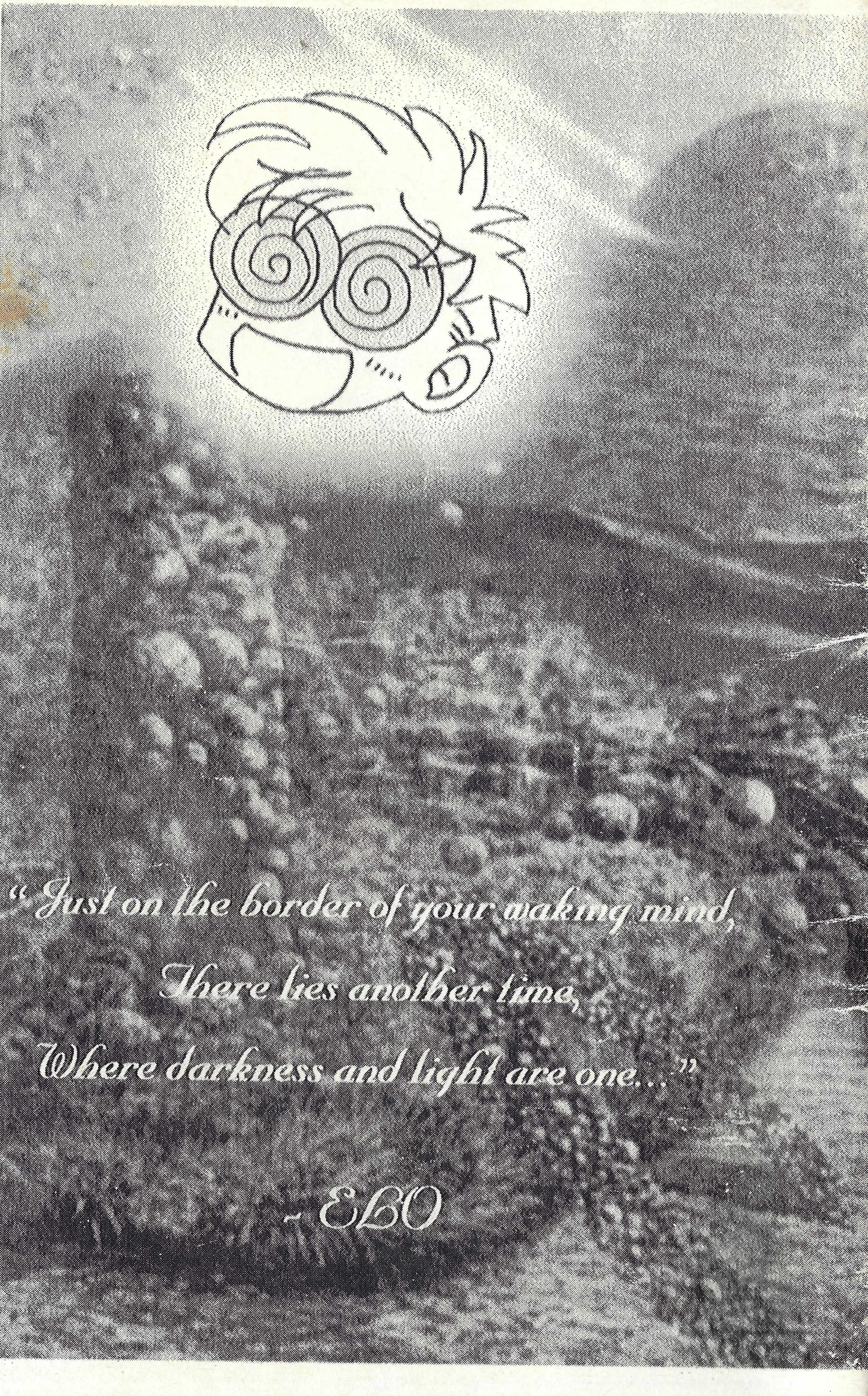
Jesus
-for always being there

Thanks For Reading The Project JACO AWA 1996 After Con Special.


JACO
JACO'S IN ATLANTA. ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.

We Hope To See You At The Next AWA!

John Bohlen ©1997



"Just on the border of your waking mind,
There lies another time,
Where darkness and light are one..."

- ELO